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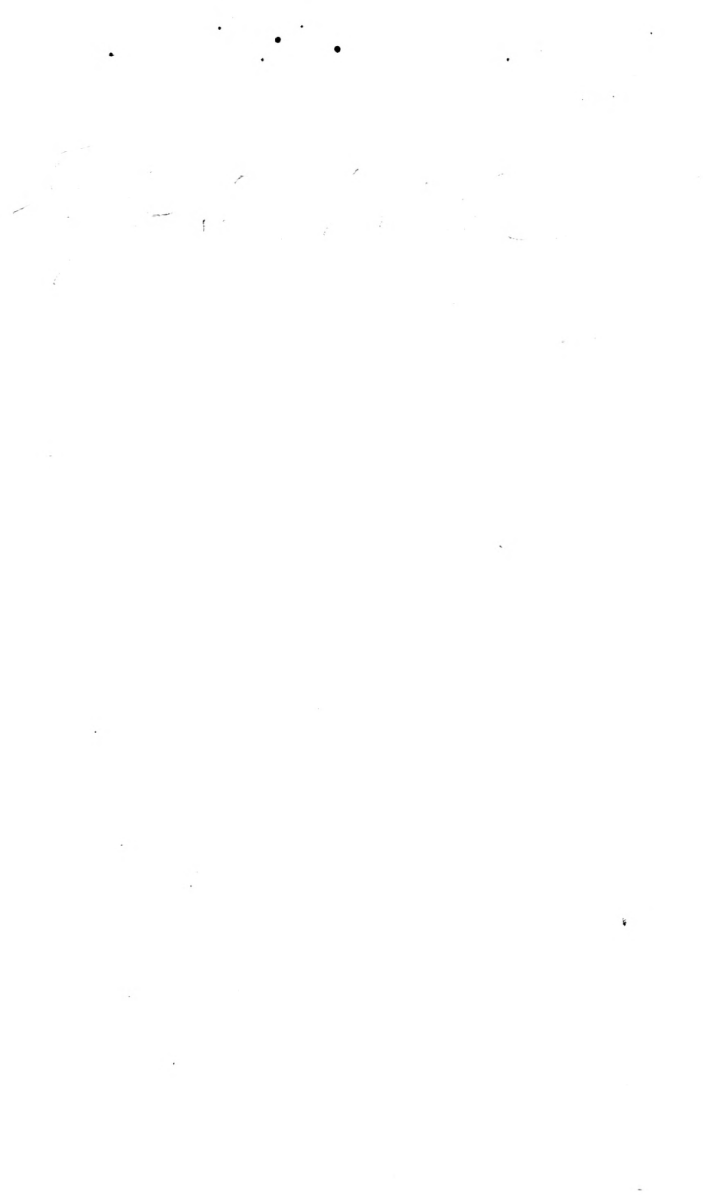
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March 1st 1864









ANDY HALL,

THE

Mission Scholar in the Army.

BY

CAROLINE E. KELLY,

AUTHOR OF "BERNICE," "GRACE HALE," ETC.



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ANDY HALL,

THE MISSION SCHOLAR IN THE ARMY.

CHAPTER I.

FATHER'S coming!" There was fear, not joy in the shrill little voice that uttered these words, and Roxy Hall, a deformed and helpless cripple, cast a terrified glance towards the door. "Father's coming!"

How sad, that the sound of his step on the stair should bring a deeper shadow to Roxy's clouded brow, and almost stop the beating of her feeble heart! How sad that in her miserable home, "father's coming" was the event

most dreaded, not by the little hunchback alone, but by her rough brother Andrew, and her slipshod, discouraged mother !

Do you ask, why was it, you to whom father's coming crowns the happy day with delight? you who cling around his neck, or sit upon his knee, or stand by his side, and cover him with your kisses and caresses?

I will tell you. It was because Roxy's father, or, as he was familiarly known in the wretched neighborhood, "Topsy Bill," was a drunkard, and instead of smiles and loving words, brought with him to his home, only curses and blows.

"Father's coming !" and at the words the sickly, misshapen child crept away from the dying embers upon the hearth, and hid herself under the rags that served as a covering for her bed of straw, in the darkest corner of the wretched garret. Meanwhile Mrs. Hall, with her bony fingers, turned over the contents of an old basket, to see if perchance there remained a bit of bread or meat for the

supper which her husband was sure to demand. In vain was the search, and as the door opened to admit his loathsome figure, she pushed it from her, and crouched despairingly closer to the hearth.

Somewhat less intoxicated than usual, and consequently more quarrelsome, Tipsey Bill threw himself down upon the floor, and after a brief pause, called out in a gruff angry voice,

"Hullo, there, Judy ! you 'sleep or dead — which ?"

His wife replied by raising her head and casting a quick glance upon his soiled and bloody face.

"Where's your supper, old woman ?"

"I ha'n't seen any," was the laconic reply.

"Perhaps you ha'n't," and Bill raised himself on his elbow, and glared upon her with the look of a wild beast. "Perhaps you ha'n't ; but the best thing for you to do, if you want a whole bone left in your body, is to pick up something for me to eat, and that right spry."

"I have hunted the victuals basket all over, and there's nothing in it but potato peelings, and a lobster shell, and two rotten apples. You can beat me if you want to, but I can't make something out of nothing, and I ain't going to try."

"Beat ye! Beating's too good for ye! I'll do something more'n that, if you don't get up and go to work. See here!" and the ruffian drew from his rags a long knife, and smiled savagely as he noted the scared look that passed over his wife's attenuated features at the sight. "Now up with ye, Judy; and if there's nothing in the basket, go out into the street. There's enough to eat in the world, and I've as good a right to it as anybody; but if ye come back empty handed, you know what to expect!" and he placed the sharp point of the knife with terrible significance against his breast.

"Andy'll be in 'fore long," ventured the woman, casting a quick glance towards the corner where poor little Roxy lay shaking

with fear. "It's stinging cold, and I ha'n't so much as a rag to cover my head. I guess he'll bring something for us all. There's more hungry than you, Bill; I'm most starved myself."

"Then start yourself out," cried Bill, with a terrible oath. "What are you waiting for?"

Poor Judy slowly arose from her seat on the hearth, and drew her ragged gown up over her bosom, holding it there with purple fingers, and under pretence of searching for something to cover her head and shoulders, drew near little Roxy's bed, and stooping over it, whispered,

"Keep still, or he'll kill ye!"

The child needed no such injunction, but she cowered closer to the wall, and hid her face in the straw, scarcely daring to breathe, as the door closed upon her mother, and she felt that she was alone with a father who hated her.

How long she lay thus she could not tell.

It seemed many hours — in reality it was not a great many minutes, when the sound of Andrew's step on the stairs fell like the sweetest music upon her ear. He came rushing in, whistling a street song, stumbled over his father in the darkness, answered the angry oath that greeted him with another, and going to the window, set his basket down upon the floor.

Roxy ventured to raise her head, and saw by the faint light, her brother picking over the cold bits that he had brought with him. He was a stout-built, broad-shouldered lad of fourteen, with quick, bright eyes, a large mouth, and dark hair that hung like coarse shag over his cheeks, his ragged cap was set far back on his head, and drawn down over his left ear, and his jacket and trowsers were so tattered and soiled it would have been a puzzle to discover their original color and texture.

Roxy wondered if he would remember her, and save a bit of bread for her supper, but she

was afraid to whisper his name lest her father should hear ; so she lay back again upon her hard bed, and tried to forget how hungry and cold she was. Through a crevice in the roof over her head she could see a beautiful light sparkling in the blue sky. Night after night, she had lain there and watched it when her poor limbs were aching and her nerves quivering with pain, and sometimes it looked so warm and bright that she wished she could hold it just a moment in her thin cold hands.

Andrew was not long in examining the contents of his basket. Two or three choice bits of bread and a dough-nut he selected and laid carefully aside upon the window-sill, took a bacon bone for his own supper, and then, at his father's angry demand, tossed the few remaining crusts and bones towards him, and stood by the window alternately whistling and gnawing, until every particle of meat was devoured. Then he looked longingly at the tempting bits of bread, and the nicely browned dough-nut, for his keen appetite was very far

from satisfied; indeed, the salt bacon had seemed rather to sharpen it. But was not this small store saved for a purpose? Should he, a strong, hearty lad of fourteen, draw from it so much as a crumb, when his little pale sister was almost fainting for food? No, indeed. A mischievous, rough, and wicked fellow was Andrew Hall, but there was one soft, warm spot in his heart, and that was his affection for poor Roxy, and he would sooner have starved than leave her supperless.

Soon after eating Topsy Bill fell asleep, and Andrew, who had been watching for this, gathered up the bits of bread, and stole to Roxy's side.

"I'm real glad you've come, Andy," said the child, caressing the rough hand that fed her, with her purple fingers. "I was so 'fraid, when mother went, and left me alone with him, but I a'n't 'fraid now."

"She'd no business to go away and leave you," said Andrew. "What made her?"

"Father. He told her to go and get some-

thing to eat. Why don't *he* bring home bread for us?"

"*He!*" and Andrew shook his hard fist at the form lying prostrate on the floor. "I wouldn't call him father if I were you, Roxy. *Hate* him, just as I do."

Roxy knew her brother too well to continue a subject that irritated him; so, still clasping his hand, she drew it up under her thin cheek, and whispered,

"I ain't hungry a bit, now. I've had a *real* good supper, and now I'm going to sleep,—but how cold it is, Andy," and a shiver ran through her feeble frame.

Andrew made no answer, but sat a few minutes thinking. Presently, drawing his hand away from hers, he pulled off his ragged jacket, and wrapped it round Roxy's feet, then his old vest, and threw it over her shoulders.

"What you doing, Andy?"

"That's nothing to you. Go to sleep."

"Are you cold, Andy?"

"No ; hold your tongue, and go to sleep, I say."

Thus gruffly admonished, Roxy closed her eyes, but in a moment they flew open, and fixing them upon the light that still shone through the crevice in the roof, she pointed upwards with one bony finger, and said, timidly, "I'll go to sleep in a minute, Andy — only tell me what is shining up there? I've seen it lots of times, and it's real pretty. What is it, Andy?"

"A star."

"Who put it there?"


"How should I know? There's bushels of 'em in the sky every night, and that's all I know about it."

Roxy turned her face to the wall, and again shut her eyes. Andrew sat beside her until he knew by her regular breathing that she was asleep ; then he went to the hearth, where the fire had long since gone out, and sitting down on the bricks, pushed his feet and hands into the still warm ashes, leaned his shaggy

head against the chimney, and in a few minutes he too, slept.

Meanwhile where was the poor wife and mother, who had gone forth into the frosty night air to seek for food !

CHAPTER II.

P the narrow, dirty lane, and into a broad, well-lighted street, went Judy Hall, cold, hopeless, and wretched. She was not ashamed to beg; she had done it more than once before; but it was late now; men were hurrying towards bright, warm homes, who would not stop on the way to bestow charity or speak a kind word to her. Standing under a lamp-post, with the light shining upon her white, despairing face, she stretched out her hand, and assumed the whining beggar tone, "Please, sir, give me a penny. I've a sick husband and little children, and we are starving." But none turned to see whence the voice came; none listened to the pitiful cry.

"It's no use," muttered Judy, after shivering thus a quarter of an hour, "I might stand here and freeze before anybody would help me." She turned away, therefore, and walking along a few steps further, paused in front of a baker's shop, and gazed wistfully in at the window. Bread, bread in abundance, on the counters, fresh and white; and on the shelves, nice cakes of all descriptions, just what they would so much like, but what she never had. Why not? Why might not Roxy enjoy delicate food like other children, instead of the refuse crusts and bones that a gentleman's dog would not eat? Was not Roxy sick and feeble? What had she done to merit such a fate? These and many other questions of a like bitter nature, passed through poor Judy's brain, as she stood looking in upon the crowded counters and shelves. A gentleman opened the door and went in. She saw him walk to the farther end of the long shop and stand there, talking with the salesman. As their conversation became more an-

inated and eager, she drew closer to the door. It was ajar.

Casting one look at the two men, whose backs were turned towards her, and a hasty glance into the street, she softly pushed the door an inch wider, crept noiselessly in, seized one small loaf from the hundreds that lay upon the counter, and, swift as thought, sped away.

"Now Roxy should have some supper; Roxy should not go to sleep hungry." Judy had just time for this thought, when a firm hand grasped her arm, and turning her frightened face, she found herself in the keeping of the police.

"O, let me go!" she cried, her limbs shaking, and tears rolling down her cheeks. "I was starving! Roxy will die! Do let me go!"

"You're going as fast as you can to the lock up," shouted a rude boy who looked on with great interest and apparent amusement. The poor creature begged and prayed to be

allowed to return to her home, but the policeman must do his duty. In vain were her prayers, and sobs, and tears. What was it to him that she had a suffering child, who would perhaps die while she was away? What was it to him that she was hungry and without a penny in the world? The laws must be executed; this woman had broken them; she must suffer the consequences. This was only one of hundreds of similar cases, and utterly failed to move him. He hurried her along over the slippery pavement, anxious only to get her off his hands, and return to his duty.

Just as they reached the station-house, a benevolent looking, plainly dressed gentleman, stopped them a moment. The woman's agonized face, raised in mute appeal to his own, went straight to his heart.

"What has she done?" he asked.

"Took her up for stealing."

"What?"

"Bread."

"We were starving," broke in poor Judy.

"I begged, and begged, but no one would hear me. Roxy'll die without me to see to her! O, sir, can't you get me off and let me go home?"

"Not to-night, my friend," replied the gentleman, so kindly that it softened the disappointment she felt. "I can do nothing for you now, but I will try and help you to-morrow." He inquired the address of the baker, and bidding her take courage, went on his way.

"Very easy to tell me take courage," murmured Judy, as the door was locked behind her, and she found herself in a small, square room, cheerless, cold, and dimly lighted by a single lamp. There were two or three hard-featured, coarse women grouped together in one corner, but Judy scarcely glanced at them. She was thinking of little Roxy and her drunken husband; and their vulgar jests and bursts of hoarse laughter, fell unheeded upon her ear. It was long after midnight before her heavy lids closed over her aching eyes, and

then her slumber was broken by the frequent opening of the door to admit some vagrant woman.

In the morning came Judy's trial at the police court, and for the offence committed, she was fined two dollars and costs.

"Two dollars and costs!" repeated the poor woman, with a groan, "I have not a penny in the world. What then?"

"Two months in the house of correction."

"Two months away from Roxy!" It was a bitter thought, for the mother-instinct was still warm in her heart. She raised her dim eyes appealingly to the face of the judge, but not a ray of hope was to be drawn from it; he had turned from her, and had probably forgotten her. But at this moment, when hope had fled, relief was at hand. The gentleman who had stopped her on the way to the station-house the previous evening, now appeared, and kindly bade her go home to Roxy.

"But I have no money," said Judy.

"I have paid the fine for you," replied her unknown friend, "and you are at liberty. What work can you do?"

"I can wash and iron, but I don't know who would hire me, and I a'n't very strong; besides, I don't like to leave Roxy alone; she is sick, and so afraid of her father; and there's nobody to see to her but Andrew, and he don't stay at home much."

"You could sew on coarse cloth, perhaps?"

"I couldn't sit long at a time; it gives me a pain in my side and shoulders, but I could sew some, if I had it. Only what good would it do for me to slave myself to earn money just for *him* to spend for rum?"

"How do you live? What have you to live upon?"

"Andrew manages to pick up cold victuals in one place and another, and sometimes I go out begging myself."

"It is a poor way to live," said the gentleman, still kindly, "though better to beg than to steal."

"I never stole in my life, till last night," cried Judy, with more spirit than she had yet shown, "and I wouldn't then, but he threatened to kill me if I came home without something to eat; and I was cold and hungry. You was never hungry, sir, and you don't know what it is to feel it gnawing, gnawing away, here," laying her hand upon her heart, and fixing her deep, hollow eyes upon his face. "Oh, I wish I and Roxy was dead, I do."

"My friend, are you ready to die?"

"Ready!" repeated Judy. "A body's ready to die when they are tired and sick of living."

"But there is another life after this; are you ready for that?"

"It can't be worse than this, if there is another. I've seen folks die before now, folks that have been as poor as me, and when the breath left 'em, their faces would look as smooth and pleasant as any rich lady's in the land. That's the way mine and Roxy's 'll look, after we die, and I a'n't afraid of any-

thing to come. We'll be as well off as the most of folks, I guess."


"My wife will call and see you," said the gentleman, when Judy paused. "You live in Mercer-lane; what number?"

"I don't know. It is the last building at the corner of Mercer-lane and Green-street, up four flight, in the garret. But she needn't come; she can't help anything, and it is no place for fine ladies."

"Here is a dollar. Buy food for Roxy and yourself, poor woman, and perhaps something may be done to help you yet."

Judy took the bank note, and her bony fingers closed over it, but she uttered no word of thanks. Her benefactor passed up the street, and she stood looking after him, until he was lost among the crowd; then she turned away and hurried homeward.

CHAPTER III.

 OXY was awake when her mother came home. Her father had gone out, and so had Andrew, after promising to return with something for her breakfast as soon as possible. She was tired of waiting thus alone, for it was bitterly cold, and the sun never came in at the two dirty little windows. She shivered on her bed of straw, and wondered how it would seem to have a warm, bright fire, and a good breakfast, but as soon as she caught sight of her mother's spiritless face, she smiled, and forgot that there was anything grievous in her lot. Such a magical charm is there in the mother's face for the little child.

"I am so glad you've come," she said, putting out her thin hand; "I thought you were

going to stay away all the time, and I never would see you any more. You wont go away again, will you?"

"I shan't if I can help it," and the poor woman sat down on the floor close beside the bed, and brushed her fingers over Roxy's pale locks. "Why didn't Andrew make a fire?"

"He is going to when he comes back; there wa'n't but a little wood and chips that he brought up last night from the wharf, so he said he wouldn't light 'em till he came back, and then I might get up and warm me; I wish I could get warm, mother; my feet and hands are so cold."

Judy did not say, "poor child!" or "my darling!" Her lips were unused to caressing words, but she took Roxy's numb feet in her hands, and rubbed them until they felt quite comfortable, and then she kindled the fire, and put some water in a tin basin to heat.

While she was about it, Andrew came in. He looked sour and surly enough when he saw that his mother had returned, and was using up his fire-wood.

"What'll you do when that is all gone?" he asked in an angry voice. "I can't get any more, and sha'n't at any rate."

"I've got some money for some coal," returned his mother, "and I should send you to get it, if I wasn't afraid to trust you with it. I'll have a fire for once, if I never do again."

Andrew's face reddened, and an angry retort was on his lips, when Roxy's feeble voice interposed.

"Did you bring me something to eat, Andy?"

"Yes, a whole slice of bread, and a bit of good meat; but you must make the best of it, for I sha'n't bring you any more to-day, Roxy. I'm going off with some fellows, and sha'n't come back 'fore to-morrow, so long's mother's come."

He laid the food upon her bed, and went away, banging the door, and running down stairs four steps at a time.

"Why don't you speak pleasant to Andy,

mother?" asked Roxy, after a pause, "the way you do to me."

"Because he's a good for nothing rogue, and *sarcy* to me. If you was *sarcy* like him; I shouldn't speak pleasant to you."

"He was real good to me while you were gone away, mother," persisted Roxy, after a brief pause. "He covered me over with his jacket and vest, and wouldn't say that he was cold. I don't think Andy's naughty all the time, mother."

"Well, you'd better hold your tongue, and eat your breakfast. I've got something to think of besides Andrew, or you either."

Thus admonished, Roxy kept still for a few minutes, watching the fire as it crackled and sparkled on the hearth. It was a pleasant and very unusual sight to her, and the warmth was so grateful to her chilled limbs that she smiled as she crept nearer to it, and stretched her hands out towards it. Soon, however, her thoughts began to wander away from herself to a little girl who lived in the opposite garret, and she said pleadingly,

"Mother, why wont you let Sally Green come in and warm her by our fire?"

Now Mrs. Hall and Sally's mother were not on good terms. As if they had not enough to suffer of poverty and want, they added to each other's discomfort by constant quarrels and disputes; therefore Roxy's proposition was met by an angry refusal, and a sharper injunction to hold her tongue, unless she wanted to be left alone for the rats to carry her off.

No additional threat was required to insure silence on the part of the timid child. She sat, or rather lay upon the floor, resting her aching back against the chimney, with her hands clasped over her knees, and her large blue eyes fixed upon the fire.

The thoughts of this untaught child we may not know. The eight short years of her life had been passed in the midst of misery and sin. She had witnessed such scenes, and heard such blasphemies as, God grant, none who read this history, may ever witness or

hear. She had never known the sweetness of caresses; even the kindness shown by her mother and Andrew, was of that rough, hard nature, that chills the warm heart and admits of no return; and yet, deep down in Roxy's heart, there was a fountain of tenderness ready to gush up at the first touch of a loving hand. I do not know how it is with these forlorn ones, who breathe out their little lives in the dark places of the earth, but I do believe "that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of the Father which is in heaven," and will not He who kept the three men in the furnace, so that the fire had no power upon their bodies — will not He keep the souls of these "little outcasts from life's fold," from the flames of sin, and for His sake who blessed little children, save them in the heavenly land?

The silence was long in the garret after Mrs. Hall's threatening words. Roxy scarcely stirred, and on the opposite side of the fire sat her mother in her usual apathetic manner.

•

Literally she had nothing to do — no beds to make, no chairs to dust, no table to set, no broom to sweep with, no cloth to sew, no yarn to knit; was it surprising that in this state of bodily and mental inactivity, the poor woman grew daily more helpless and despairing, and looked forward to the grave as the peaceful end of her dreary life?

It was somewhat past noon when Roxy was startled by the unusual sound of a rap on the door. She looked at her mother, who was sleeping heavily, and fearing to awake her, called in her weak, tremulous accent, "come in."

In answer to this invitation, the door was pushed open, and a lady entered — such a lady as Roxy's wondering eyes had never beheld. She was young and fair, with sweet lips and smiling eyes that looked lovingly down upon the unsightly child who crouched lower in her rags at the vision of beauty. She wore neither feathers, nor bright flowers, nor jewels, but her dress was soft and rich,

and her voice was so sweet that when she spoke Roxy held her breath to listen, and in listening forgot to answer, until the question was thrice repeated.

"Is your name Roxy — Roxy Hall?"

"Yes."

The lady looked about her for a seat, but there was none in the room, and for a moment, as she saw what poverty was here, the smile faded from her face; it returned, however, hopeful and bright as before, as she turned again to the child, who watched her every motion.

"You are sick, arn't you, Roxy?"

"No, I guess not, only my back aches."

"Poor little back! it ought to rest against a softer cushion than that chimney. Does it ache all the time, dear?"

"Yes."

Tears rushed to the beautiful eyes at this reply. There was a patience and hopelessness in the feeble voice that went straight to her heart, and it was with difficulty that she commanded herself to speak again.

"Is that your mother, Roxy?"

"Yes."

"Is she ill?"

"What?"

"Is your mother sick?"

"No; she is asleep."

"Can you wake her?"

"I don't like to, 'cause she's cross when I do."

"Then I will," said the lady; but Judy awoke of herself at the unusual sound of voices, and slowly rose from the floor, rubbing her eyes, and looking rather ashamed.

"You are Mrs. Hall, I suppose?" said the lady, holding out her hand. Judy declined taking it — no wonder that she hesitated to take the slender white fingers in her hard and dirt-grimmed palm — but answered civilly,

"Yes, that's my name."

"And mine is Mrs. Proctor," said the lady. "My husband told me about you and your little Roxy, and I thought I would call and see you. I would like to do something to help you, if I may."

"I told him you'd better not come," said Judy. "I told him it wasn't the place for fine ladies, and you can see for yourself that it isn't. I haven't so much as a chair for you to sit down on."

"Never mind that; I can stand very well; but it is hard for your little girl to sit upon the floor with her weak back."

"O, she's used to it; she don't mind it, and it's well she don't."

"But I may send her a chair with a cushion, may I not? It would be so much easier for her."

Judy laughed, a bitter, hollow laugh.

"You may send it if you want to," she replied, "but in less'n twenty-four hours it'll be sold for rum. I can't keep anything that *he* can sell. I had some chairs once, and a table, and a bed, but where are they now? He's drunk 'em up, every one, so what's the use of trying?"

"But perhaps he would not sell Roxy's chair," said Mrs. Proctor, gently, "if he knew it was a comfort to her."

"He'd take it first of anything, just for that very reason," interrupted Judy; "it's just all I can do when he's at home to keep him from beating her."

"Beating that poor child!" exclaimed Mrs. Proctor, inexpressibly shocked. "Surely he is not so cruel as that!"

"Yes, he is. He can't bear to see her round, and the minute she hears him coming, she creeps off to bed out of his way."

"Where is her bed?"

Judy pointed to the dark corner, where the bundle of straw and rags was just visible.

"Does she sleep there?"

"Yes; it's better'n than the floor, where I sleep."

"Certainly it is," said Mrs. Proctor, "very much better; but I was thinking there is one thing I can do. I can send a nice soft pillow for her bed, and it is so dark up in that snug corner, that it may escape your husband's notice, so she will rest more easily at night. Should you like that, Roxy?"

Roxy did not answer, though she was sure that anything the lady sent would be beautiful and nice.

"She don't know what a pillow is, she never saw one," remarked her mother, by way of apologizing for Roxy's silence, "but then she'll like it."

Mrs. Proctor did not prolong her visit at this time. There was everything to be done for this wretched family, but how to begin to help them was a puzzling question which she felt that her husband must help her to solve. So she bade Mrs. Hall good afternoon, and stooping, left a soft, sweet kiss on Roxy's forehead. Then she went away, and the little garret which had been lighted by her presence, grew dark and dreary again.

CHAPTER IV.

IT was on Saturday that Mrs. Proctor called to see Mrs. Hall and Roxy, and it will be remembered that it was on the same day that Andrew left them, "with some fellows," to be gone, he said, until "to-morrow." That to-morrow was Sunday—the Lord's day; but neither Andrew nor his companions had been thought to reverence its sacred hours. To them it was like any other day in the week. True, they heard the sweet chiming of church bells, and saw crowds of well dressed people gathering together in their different places of worship, but they knew not nor cared why it was. Between those rustling garments of silk and velvet and fine cloth, and their own soiled and tattered garments, there was a barrier deep

and wide, a barrier which they felt to be impassable. The elegant stone churches were made for the rich—not for them in their squalor, even had they wished to enter.

Andrew's companions, like himself, were idle and profane, seeking mischief and delighting in it as all idlers do. They passed Saturday afternoon and evening on the wharves, begging of the sailors, until about nine o'clock, when Andrew offered "to treat." At the nearest oyster saloon they stopped. It was a low, dirty place, the air thick with tobacco smoke, and strongly scented with bad whiskey, but these poor boys were not fastidious. Andrew led them in, and seating himself at a table, ordered "stews for four."

"Whiskey, too," suggested Sam James, the oldest and most wretched of the party. "Don't be mean, Hall. Let's have a drop of whiskey."

"I ain't mean," returned Andrew with an oath; "but if you have anything to drink, you'll have to get it yourself; I can't raise but a quarter."

"I ha'n't got but a shilling," rejoined Sam, "but I'll let it go, rather'n not have something lively." Accordingly the whiskey was ordered, and the boys, imitating the example of the rough looking men who sat and lounged about the room, swallowed the "liquid fire," and drained their glasses with bursts of wild laughter, and amid profane and low jests. It was not until a late hour that the voice of the bar-keeper warned his young customers to leave their seats by the fire, and go about their business. Andrew was far from his home, and knew not whither to go for a night's rest, but more than once he had slept under the logs and lumber of the wharves, and if need be he could do it again. Sam James, and his other companions, went away by themselves, when they reached the end of the street, while Andrew, whose brain was reeling, and whose steps were uneven, was left alone. He stood for some minutes undecided what course to take. It was a bitterly cold night, and sleet and snow were falling fast, If he turned in

the direction of the wharves the storm would beat in his face ; if he kept on up the street towards home, it was very uncertain when, if at all, he would find shelter for the night. Poor, miserable boy ! The strong drink was working in his brain ; he shook in every limb ; his feet were growing numb with the cold ; if he remained in one position longer, he would be unable to move, so gathering up his resolution, he walked along up the street, keeping in the shadow of the houses as much as possible, in order to save himself from the violence of the storm, which increased rapidly, and also to avoid the notice of the watchman. At the close of about half an hour, he stopped, feeling utterly unable to go another step. He was in front of a brick block on —— avenue. The lights were out ; all was still ; if he could lie down under the porch and sleep until morning, how happy he would be ! Only to sleep and to rest, though he had but a granite rock for a pillow, would be so sweet ! Weary and aching in every limb, he crawled up the broad

steps, and threw himself down at the threshold of the door, determining to awake and be off in the morning before light. But it was after sunrise when his heavy eye-lids unclosed; he had slept heavily and long, and would have slept longer still, had not a hand been laid upon his shoulder, and a voice said, not unkindly, close to his face,

"What's the matter, my boy? Sick, eh?"

Andrew sprang up, and rubbing his eyes with his benumbed fingers, answered,

"I got caught out in the storm, and hadn't any place to sleep in, so I came up here. I a'n't sick, but my head aches."

"You've been drinking—that's what ails you," rejoined the man, sternly. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself—such a boy as you—not more than a dozen years old——"

"I am fourteen," interrupted Andrew, "besides, I haven't been drinking."

"Don't tell a lie, sir. Isn't it bad enough to do a wicked thing without trying to hide it? I can tell by the looks of your eyes and face."

Andrew looked angrily at his new acquaintance. He was a man of middle age, with grey hair and rough but kindly countenance.

"Take my advice, boy, and never, never touch another drop of spirits while you live. It will ruin you body and soul; I know what it is to be the slave of a whiskey bottle; I tried it thirty-five years of my life, and should have been a drunkard this day, but for my master," pointing towards the house. "He found me and helped me when everybody else despised me, and he kept a sharp look out for me till I became a sober man, and now he employs me in his family, and my home is here. But I tell you, boy," he resumed after a moment's pause, "I'll tell you it is hard to break off an old habit; it is like taking the very life out of you. Just make up your mind now you're young that you'll keep from drink, and you will never have to suffer what I have. Wont you promise?"

Andrew stood kicking his feet against the stone steps. Certainly he was not so bright

or happy after drinking spirits, that he need persist in it, but then — why should he promise? — why give his word to this strange man, and so resign his liberty to do as he pleased?

“Wont you promise, boy?”

“No, I wont,” said Andrew doggedly. “I wont promise any such thing. Men drink, and boys drink, and women drink, and men sell liquor and get rich by it. I’ll do as other folks do.”

“Other folks do wrong, and they have to suffer for it in the long run,” replied the man. “Are they happy, do you think? You’ve seen ’em staggering home, cursing and swearing; you’ve seen how the little children run from them, frightened and trembling, haven’t you?”

Yes, indeed, all this and more, had Andrew seen in his own miserable home. He had seen poor little Roxy creep away to her dark corner, to hide there her white face; he had seen his mother shrink in horror from the heavy hand that hesitated not to deal blows

upon her slender form; he himself had fled more than once out into the street, to escape the insane wrath of a drunkard; and this drunkard — this man who brought curses and misery, where he should have brought gentle words and happiness — was Andrew's own father! Was there any thing so alluring in the pictures that flashed through his brain as he stood listening to the earnest words of his stranger friend, that he should wish to prolong them, or make them even more real?

The man unable to follow Andrew's thoughts, saw that he hesitated, and spoke again still more earnestly than before.

"Just think of it, my boy," he said. "You'll gain nothing in health, in purse, or in respectability, by drinking. I tell you there's nothing to hinder you from becoming a smart man — I can see it your eye — if you will only make up your mind to let strong drink alone. Have you a mother?"

"Yes," replied Andrew, in a surley tone.

"Is she a good mother?"

"I don't know whether she is or not."

"You know whether you love her, or not?"

"Humph! I never thought anything about it. I don't stay at home much."

"Why not?"

"'Cause it a'n't much of a place to stay in; and it's awful when the old man is there."

"Who is that? Your father? What is the trouble with him?"

"He's a drunkard," and Andrew dropped his eyes as he answered.

"Poor boy! Isn't that enough to keep *you* sober? I need tell you nothing more, for you know it all yourself; you have it in your own home; the want, the wretchedness, the woe; and yet, you refuse to promise to keep yourself sober?"

Andrew was fast growing vexed; besides he was cold, and very hungry. He answered sharply; "It's nothing to you, anyway, what I do. If I've a mind to drink, I shall do it. I wish I had some whiskey this minute to warm myself with."

"Sure enough, you must be in need of something after staying out here in the storm all night," said his friend. "Come right round to the back door, and warm yourself by the kitchen fire, and I'll get Ann to give you a cup of hot coffee, and some bread and butter; then you'll feel better. Oh, come right along," seeing the boy hesitated. "My master and mistress would be vexed enough, if I let you go away from their door, cold and hungry; come along."

Thus urged, Andrew followed his guide to the kitchen, where he was shown a comfortable seat by the fire, and soon Ann, with a pleasant smile, drew a little table close up beside him, and brought bread, meat, and hot coffee for his refreshment. How thoroughly he enjoyed all this comfort, my reader can imagine far better than I am able to describe.

CHAPTER V.

JUST as Andrew was swallowing the last mouthful of bread, the door leading from the kitchen to the dining-room opened slowly, and a little girl appeared. She stood looking at the strange boy from under the shadow of her short brown curls, with a half shy, half curious look, and as he pushed back his chair and took his hat to go, she came a step nearer, and said, in a voice that sounded like sweet music,

“What is your name, boy?”

“Andrew Hall.”

“Where do you live?”

“In Mercer-lane.”

“I don’t know where Mercer-lane is, but I guess my papa does, for he knows all about the city. Have you any little sisters?”

"Yes, one."

"What is her name?"

"Roxy."

"Is she as big as I?"

"No; she is only eight years old."

"Well, I am not eight yet. I am only seven. Why isn't she as big as I? Is she pretty?"

"Pretty enough, but she's sick and lame, and she can't walk like you."

"Why, what does she do when she wants to go anywhere?"

"She creeps along on her hands and knees, but she never goes out into the street."

"O, dear, how sorry I am for the poor little girl. I should like to see her."

"No you wouldn't," said Andrew, shortly.

"It would make you almost sick. She don't look well and clean like you, and her clothes are all ragged and dirty."

"I'll go and ask mamma to let me send her one of my gowns; you wait till I come back, wont you, Andrew Hall?"

"It a'n't any use. I a'n't going home this morning, and I don't want to bother about it."

At this moment some one called from the dining-room,

"Lily!" and the pretty child answered,

"Yes, papa, I'm coming; only please look here one minute, and speak to Andrew Hall."

Andrew glanced towards the street-door, very anxious to avoid meeting the gentleman of the house, and to make his escape, but before he could reach it, Lily's father, Mr. Kent, appeared.

"Have you had as much breakfast as you wish for, Andrew?" he asked, in the kindest of voices.

"Yes," said Andrew, hanging his head, and twisting his cap in his nervous fingers.

"And are you warm enough?"

"Yes."

"I always say, yes, sir, to papa" interrupted Lily.

To this observation Andrew made no reply, but his brown cheek flushed a little.

"What are you going to do with yourself, to-day?" asked Mr. Kent.

"Don't know."

"Can you tell me what day it is?"

"No, I don't know."

"Why, it is Sunday," again interposed Lily. "Don't you go to church or Sunday School, Andrew?"

"No."

"Don't you want to go?"

"No, I don't."

"Why, it is just as nice as can be at Sunday School, isn't it, papa?" and Lily gave her father an appealing look, that said as plainly as words could have done, "*You* tell him how nice it is, and ask him to go."

Mr. Kent smiled, and bidding Lily go up stairs and ask mamma if she were ready for prayers, he turned again to Andrew, who was gradually edging near the door, and said,

"Suppose you spend the day with me, Andrew. If you are not going home, it will be much better for you than wandering about

the streets. You shall have a good dinner and supper, and I think you will enjoy it. Will you stay?"

The prospect of a good dinner and supper, was pleasant enough. Andrew was almost inclined to say yes, but there was something in the appearance and manner of Mr. Kent, kind as he was, that he felt as a restraint, and longed to throw off.

"Taylor, the man who found you asleep on my door-step this morning," continued Mr. Kent, "tells me that you have an intemperate father. I am very sorry to hear it; it must be worse for your little sister Roxy than for you, if she is a sickly, lame child, as I heard you telling my daughter she was. Does your father abuse her?"

"Not when she keeps out of his way, but sometimes," and here his voice choked, and a crimson flush dyed cheek and forehead, "*sometimes he strikes her!*"

"Poor little thing!" said Mr. Kent, observing Andrew's emotion, and guessing from it

his affection for Roxy. "What do you do to make it pleasant for her at home?"

The boy looked up in his face with a puzzled countenance.

"What do you do to amuse your little sister? It must be very sad and lonely for her."

"I get her 'most everything she has to eat, but I can't stay in the house; there's no fun in it."

"Mamma has come down, and sister Hilary is ready; come, papa," and Lily, tripping through the dining-room, caught her father's hand; "and papa," she added in a loud whisper, "please mayn't Andrew Hall come to?"

"Yes, if he will," replied Mr. Kent. "Andrew, I would like to talk a while longer with you, but it is the hour for family worship. Come up stairs to the library with me, and after prayers I shall be at leisure for a short time."

Andrew had not the slightest idea what was meant by "family worship," and he was growing every moment more anxious to get away

from the grave, earnest eyes, that seemed to look straight into his heart; he was going to say no, in answer to Mr. Kent's invitation, when Lily added in her sweet, persuasive voice,

"Come, Andrew Hall, and you will hear my sister Hilary play a beautiful hymn on the piano." It was not so much what she said, as the sweet smile that accompanied the words, which led Andrew to follow her light steps up the broad, carpeted stairs, through the hall and into the library, where Mrs. Kent and Miss Hilary sat waiting. He took the chair nearest the door, at Lily's suggestion, and looked on with great curiosity as Taylor, Ann, and another young woman entered, and seated themselves near him. Mr. Kent named a hymn, when all was quiet, and Miss Hilary played a very sweet prelude upon the piano-forte, and then all joined in singing:

"Safely through another week,
God has brought us on our way;
Let us now a blessing seek,
Waiting in his courts to-day:
Day of all the week the best,
Emblem of eternal rest."

All but Andrew. He sat with his face half hidden in his ragged cap, listening with a beating heart, to the beautiful melody. He never thought of the sentiment of the words, but the music awakened all that was noble and good in his nature, and he looked upon Miss Hilary, whose pure, clear voice, led the others, as one would look upon an angel. The hymn was sung to its close, and then Mr. Kent read and explained a passage from St. Mark's gospel. But this, too, was lost upon Andrew, in whose ears the strains of music were still ringing, and who never once removed his dark eyes from Miss Hilary's face. After the chapter came the prayer. All knelt devoutly, all but Andrew, who sat still, and watched the others. One petition caught his wandering thoughts, and fixed them for a moment; it was a fervent petition that God would bless the poor stranger boy, and teach him to forsake all evil ways, so that the Saviour would own him for his disciple and friend.

Andrew was very far from comprehending the import of this prayer ; he had never heard God's holy name, save in profane uses ; he was as ignorant of Jesus, as the children in heathen lands ; but there was a solemnity of manner, an earnestness of voice that touched him, and filled him with confused, and new thoughts, and he felt a desire to learn the meaning and design of a service so strange to him.

After prayers were over, and the servants dismissed, Mr. Kent repeated his invitation to Andrew, to spend the remainder of the day with him ; and the invitation was seconded by Mrs. Kent, whose mother's heart went out towards the forlorn, rough-looking boy. The inducement of dinner and supper was also again presented, for Mr. Kent judged rightly, that if he would help the starving soul, he must also supply the wants of the body.

" I don't care about anything to eat," broke in Andrew, almost sharply, " if she," pointing with his dirty finger to Miss Hilary, " will only make some more music on that thing ! "

"O, I will play for you with pleasure," said Miss Hilary, smiling. "Do you like music?"

Andrew was afraid, rough as he was to answer, but his eyes sparkled, and he drew a step or two nearer the instrument.

Miss Hilary took her seat, and touched the white keys with her fingers.

"Please play, 'I have a Father in the promised land,' sister," said Lily. "He will like that, I know."

Andrew looked as if he would like anything that Miss Hilary would play. He stood and listened, until the breakfast bell rang, and she was obliged to stop.

"You will come down to the kitchen, now, Andrew," said Mrs. Kent, pleasantly, "and after breakfast I will see if I can find a jacket and cap for you to wear to Sunday School and church."

"And I will play some more for you by-and-by," added Miss Hilary.

"Those are the hymns we sing at Sunday School," said Lily, as she opened the kitchen



Andy listening to the Pianno. - P. 54

door, "and you will learn to sing them all, if you will only go, and I will ask papa to give you a hymn-book for your own, and then you can sing to your sister Roxy."

Dear little Lily ! she could not keep Andrew out of her thoughts, but all through breakfast time was making her simple plans for his instruction in the Sunday School which she so dearly loved, while her parents suffered her to prattle on, unrebuked, glad to find her thus early in life, interesting herself for others.

The moment she was at liberty, Lily ran to the kitchen to see if Andrew had decided to stay. Her cheeks were glowing, her eyes bright, her lips smiling, she opened the door, gave one quick glance around the room, and burst into tears. Andrew was gone !

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE I was in the cellar," said Ann, "he took his chance to go. First I thought perhaps he'd stolen something and made off with it, but when I looked around the room everything was in its place."

"Poor boy," said Mrs. Kent, drawing Lily close to her side, and kissing her. "I am sorry that he has gone, but we all tried to keep him: perhaps, my darling, he will come again."

"Oh, we will find him — never fear, Lily," said her father. "We know his name and the street on which he lives; cheer up, my little girl."

"I wanted him to go to Sunday-School with us," sobbed Lily, "and I thought perhaps I'd

give him one of my picture books for Roxy. I think it is too bad."

It was a great disappointment to the enthusiastic child, but she wiped her eyes, and went away to prepare for church somewhat comforted by her father's assurance.

Meanwhile, Andrew, seizing the opportunity when Ann was in the cellar, made his escape. Never, until to-day, had the thought of his tattered garments, and uncleanly person given him trouble or dissatisfaction, but now it occurred to his mind that he was unfit to be in the company of such ladies as Mrs. Kent and Miss Hilary. He was much more than half inclined to go to the Sunday-School, where hymns were sung, but as he sat in the kitchen and thought of the sorry figure he would make, where all was tidy and nice, he fully decided to do no such thing, and as he felt quite unable to withstand the entreaties of Lily, he concluded to avoid them; hence his abrupt departure. He ran a few steps, then paused and looked about him. It was a

clear, cold morning, after the storm of the previous night; the trees were covered with ice crystals, that sparkled in the sun like splendid gems; the church bells sent forth a happy peal of music, as he stood apparently lost in thought; people, passing hurriedly along, glanced carelessly at the thinly clad boy, but none stopped to speak to him; none remembered that here was a young soul; an inheritor of immortality, standing at the threshold of life, and sure to walk in the broad path of folly and vice, unless pointed to the better way, and encouraged to walk therein. True, some mothers there were, who, leading happy children by the hand, cast a pitying glance at the rough, hard-featured lad, and thanked God that their own lambs were safe from contact with such as he; and one or two boys and girls, with bright faces and smooth curls, wondered why he stood there alone, with such a sullen countenance; but none gave him either word or smile. Standing thus, with his face turned towards the house he had

lately left, he at length saw the hall door open, and Miss Hilary come out followed by Lily. He watched them until they turned the first corner, then, pulling his cap closer down over his eyes, he ran after them, keeping far enough behind to escape their observation. They walked fast, for it was rather late, and Andrew saw them enter a fine church, the spire of which seemed almost to pierce the clouds. As they disappeared, and others crowded up the broad steps, Andrew turned away, and sauntered down the street. It had been a singular morning to him. It was something very unusual to have a good warm breakfast; still more unusual to have kind words and looks bestowed upon him; but the strangest and sweetest thing of all, was that hour in the library; the prayer, the music, and the beautiful singing, that still lingered in his ear, and seemed to shut out, for a little while, evil thoughts and desires. He began to regret that he did not remain, where all was so good and peaceful, in spite of his rag-

ged and soiled clothes, instead of running away, and to wish that he might have another opportunity. But there was little chance of his having a second invitation, after his treatment of the first. Thinking thus of his morning's adventures, he met a grey-haired, benevolent looking gentleman, who wore gold bowed spectacles, and carried an ivory walking stick in one hand, and a Bible in the other.

Certainly our poor street boy was in the keeping of the good God, and on this day was held in dear remembrance, for as the gentleman's eyes fell upon him, he stopped and said, so cheerfully, that it was a pleasure to listen,

"Well, my boy, this is a fine morning. Are you on your way to the Sunday School?"

"No," said Andrew. "I don't go to Sunday School."

"Come along with me; then," and the gentleman took him by the arm, and turned him about. "I want you to see *my* Sunday School, and if you don't like it, why you need

not come again. It is close by here, not in a church, but over a grocery store, and you need not think of your clothes, for the boys and girls you will meet there, are some of them quite as ragged as you. Do you know how to sing?"

"No."

"You can whistle, can't you?"

"Yes," and Andrew looked up to see if the gentleman was laughing at him. But no; his face was bright and pleasant, but quite serious.

"If you can whistle you will readily learn to sing, and our songs are simple and easy to learn."

"I don't want to go," ventured Andrew, suffering himself, notwithstanding, to be led along.

"But here we are, my young friend," said the gentleman, stopping before an open door, about which stood a number of boys of all ages, who pressed forward to receive a smile of recognition or a pleasant word. He led

them up the narrow, dark stairway, keeping fast hold of Andrew's arm, and opened the door of the school-room.

It was a long, narrow hall, poorly lighted by four windows; the seats were partly benches, partly chairs, with here and there a three-legged stool; the walls were dark with smoke; there was nothing particularly attractive in the appearance of the room, but there was a good fire in the stove, around which huddled a group of children, finding such comfort in the warmth as they were denied at home. Their sallow, peaked faces, brightened as they caught sight of their superintendent, and the whisper passed from one to another,

"Here comes Mr. Wallace!"

He led Andrew the length of the hall, and seated him on a bench quite near his desk; then he rung a little bell, and the disorderly children, after some minutes spent in pushing and knocking each other about, took their places. While this was going on, the teachers of the school came in, and Mr. Wallace

waited patiently until all were seated, and quiet. Then they sung a hymn. All voices joined in it, and as some were but just learning to sing, and others sung only for the sake of making a noise, the music was not very fine ; still, I doubt not, it was listened to by the angels with quite as much interest and pleasure, as the elaborate chants and anthems, that were being executed at the same moment, by paid choirs, in the elegant churches near by.

Andrew sat very still during the singing of the hymn, for the words and tune were the same that Miss Hilary had sung to him that morning,

“ I have a Father in the promised land.”

When it was finished, Mr. Wallace said :

“ We all have a Father in the promised land ; by what other name do you know him ? ”

“ He is God,” was the answer.

“ What has God given to us ? ”

The replies to this question were various. Some said, “ The Sunday School,” others, “ bread to eat ; ” others still, “ a good fire to

warm us by, when we come to school ;" one pale, thin child, answered softly, " The Bible, and Jesus."

Mr. Wallace continued :

" Does God our Father give us all good things ?"

" Yes, sir. "

" Does he love to have us ask him for what we need and what we want ?"

" Yes, sir."

" Shall we ask him to take care of us to-day ?"

" Yes, sir."

" God is so good," said Mr. Wallace, very seriously, " that he cannot bear to have us speak to him in prayer, unless we are in earnest, and mean what we say. If we laugh, and whisper, and play, he is displeased with us. He will not listen to us. We cannot see God, but he sees us every moment, and knows whether we really wish him to take care of us."

By this time, there was almost perfect si-

lence in the hall ; the most unruly of the children were quiet ; and Mr. Wallace, closing his eyes, committed all present to the care and love of the Father in heaven. The prayer was fervent, simple, and very brief, for Mr. Wallace understood the restless temper of those for whom it was offered, and was too wise, to weary them by long petitions, which they could not understand. After prayer a second hymn was sung, followed by the commandments, which were repeated in concert : and then came a recitation of lessons, by the classes, to their respective teachers.

Mr. Wallace now being at leisure, came and sat down beside Andrew, who had been watching, from under his shaggy eyebrows, every movement made by the boys in the seat nearest to him, and pleasantly asked :

“ Well, my lad, how do you like the school thus far ? ”

“ I don’t know,” replied Andrew.

Mr. Wallace went on :

“ Do you see the lady who sits on the bench

the other side of the desk, talking with five boys about your size? She has on a black bonnet and dress?"

Andrew nodded his head.

"Those boys have never been in a Sunday School until this morning. The lady, Mrs. Laurie, invited them in just as I did you, and as she had some things to tell them, she took them up into that corner by themselves. They seem to be quite interested in her story, whatever it is."

Andrew turned his head slightly, and Mr. Wallace observed that his countenance expressed some curiosity; so he continued:

"Perhaps you would like to sit with those boys and listen, rather than stay here by yourself? I will go with you, if you don't wish to go alone." He rose as he spoke, and Andrew rose too, it seemed almost involuntarily. Mrs. Laurie looked up and smiled as they approached her seat.

"Here is a boy, who, I think, would like to listen to what you are saying," said Mr. Wallace. "His name is Andrew Hall."

"I am glad to see you," and Mrs. Laurie held out her hand. Andrew drew back his own; it was too hard and dirty to touch anything so fair and white; he did not even look into the lady's face, but dropped his head, until his thick, uncombed hair fell over his eyes and screened them from sight. Mrs. Laurie, seeing his embarrassment, turned away from him and went on with the story.

She was talking about the country which none of the boys had ever seen, and describing the fields and meadows, the hills and groves, the beautiful flowers that bloom by the roadside, and the green grass that is like a soft carpet to the feet. Her account of country sights and sounds was very interesting, so much so, indeed, that even Andrew forgot his awkward shyness, and listened with great interest.

When Mrs. Laurie saw, that every eye was fixed upon her, and that the boys were eagerly waiting to hear what was coming next, she said, in the same pleasant and cheerful tone,

"Some one made all these things that I have been telling you about. Some one made the sun to shine upon the earth, and the rain to fall upon it, so that the grass seeds and the flower seeds would spring open, and send up little shoots to make it beautiful. I wonder if any of you can tell me who it was that made all the lovely things that I have described to you?"

No one spoke.

"I will tell you, then; and I would like it if you will all try and remember. It was God. He made the earth, the sea, and the sky, and the stars that shine above our head in the night. He made all birds and beasts, and fishes, and insects. He created man, and gives to us life and breath; if he were to forget us for even one moment, we would die. He gives us everything that is good, and if we love him, we shall always be happy. Now will you tell me, boys, who it is that does so much for us?"

The boys looked at one another and were

silent, but when the question was repeated, the youngest and smallest of them answered, "God."

"Very well," said Mrs. Laurie, and at that moment Mr. Wallace called the school to order.

A hymn was sung; then all closed their eyes, and, as many as knew it, repeated in concert the Lord's Prayer. The school was dismissed by classes, and the boys made a great deal of noise rushing down over the stairs; the girls, most of them small and sickly, lingered by the fire, before returning to their cheerless homes. Mrs. Laurie kept her class to ask them if they would all try to be present on the next Sabbath.

"I would like to have you come too, Andrew," she said, kindly. "Will you?"

"I don't know." This was all the answer he would make, and he hung his head, and twirled his cap, and shuffled restlessly with his feet, until Mrs. Laurie, in despair, dismissed him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE little girl who was "sick and lame, whose clothes were all ragged and dirty," according to the description given by Andrew, haunted the brain of Lily Kent, for several days, and her little heart was filled with sympathy, and an ardent desire to see and aid one so unfortunate.

"Only just think, dear mamma," she suddenly exclaimed one morning, as her mother was kindly showing her how to hem her doll's frock, "only just think ! that little Roxy Hall can't walk like me, but has to creep upon her hands and knees ; and then she has no good clothes to wear."

As Lily had made the same remark about twenty times during the last two or three

days, Mrs. Kent was not particularly startled by it, but she kindly said,

"It is very sad for Roxy."

Lily was silent for a few moments, then looking thoughtfully up into her mother's face, she said softly,

"I think I ought to be very thankful to my heavenly Father, for giving me nice feet to walk with, don't you, mamma?"

"Yes, darling."

"And for clothes, that are so pretty and good," continued Lily, smoothing down the folds of her soft crimson merino. "But then I wouldn't have such clothes, if papa did not buy them for me; and God gave me papa; God gives me every thing I have that is nice."

Mrs. Kent made no reply to this, for she saw that Lily's young mind was working, and she preferred to wait and see whither it would lead her.

"Mamma, I wonder what was the reason that God gave Roxy lame feet, when I have

good strong ones?" The question came hesitatingly, and the shadow deepened on the fair, open brow.

"I cannot tell you *why*, my child, but God is so great and good that he never does anything without a reason. He knows just what is best not only for you, but for Roxy."

"I think it is very hard for her!" sighed Lily. "And then God can do everything. It wouldn't be hard for him to make Roxy well."

"Not hard," replied her mother; "and he will undoubtedly do so, if he sees fit. In the meantime, dear, I think there is something for you to do to make Roxy happy."

"I wish I could, mamma," cried Lily eagerly. "I *do wish* I could! What may I do?"

"What would you like to do?"

"I would like to carry her a new gown. Will you buy one for her, and take it, after papa finds the house."

"That would be my gift, not yours."

Lily looked up surprised, and her mother added,

"If you wish to give Roxy something, and I purchase the article, and allow you to carry it to her, don't you see that it is not your gift?"

"Yes, ma'am. But you and papa, and Hilary and aunt Jenny give me every thing, so I never can make Roxy a present." Lily looked troubled.

"The books and toys that have been given you, and the bright bits of silver in your savings bank, are all your own to dispose of as you like," said Mrs. Kent.

Lily was an amiable, lovely child, but her parents had noticed with pain that seeds of selfishness were sown in her heart, and it was their constant endeavor to uproot them before they grew up into strong and noxious weeds.

"I don't like to give away my books and toys," said Lily, dolefully; "and I am saving my money for Christmas, you know, mamma; and Christmas comes next week."

"Oh, well," replied Mrs. Kent, you are not

obliged to give Roxy a present ; you spoke of it yourself, my dear."

"I know it," said Lily, and then she sat very still for some time.

"Mamma," she said at length, "I don't suppose Roxy has any toys, do you?"

"I should think not ; from the appearance of her brother, and what he told us, the family must be very, very poor ; much poorer than you can imagine, Lily."

"I have been thinking, mamma," Lily continued, "that if she hasn't any toys at all, perhaps I would give her my old Noah's Ark. I haven't touched it for ever so long, for the animals are almost all lost, and those that are left are broken. I guess she would like it, though ; don't you?"

"Would you like to have it given you in such a condition, my dear?"

Lily blushed, and hung her head.

"Perhaps Roxy would be pleased," her mother continued, "to have even such a poor gift as that, but there would be nothing gen-

erous in your giving it to her. It is an old, cast-off toy, that affords you no amusement; you would not miss it in the least."

"What shall I give her, then? I'm sure I don't think of anything else, mamma."

"You must decide for yourself, my child. I cannot help you, but if you wish to be generous in giving, your gift must be something that you *really value*, and that you will miss when it is gone. There is no generosity in giving away what you do not care for, nor want yourself."

Lily would have been glad to have had her mother talk with her longer on this subject, but Mrs. Kent preferred to leave her to reflect upon what had already been said; accordingly she laid the doll's frock on the little girl's lap, and left the room. Lily did not touch it; she sat thinking, with her eyes bent upon the floor.

"I am sure I don't know what to do," said she, to herself. "I wish mamma would give Roxy something pretty. I haven't a great

many toys; and I don't want to give them away. There's my dissected picture; she wouldn't like that, I'm sure, and besides, uncle Frank sent it to me from New-York; there's my doll's house; that was my birthday present from aunt Jenny, and I can't spare it at any rate; but there's my box of blocks; I might give her those; or, no; I can't either, because I've nothing else that cousin Charley likes to play with, when he comes to see me. My white tea-set? No; *that* I can't spare, for what would I do when I want to play tea with you, Nelly?" Here Lily took her beautiful large China doll in her arms, and looked in its pretty face with great affection. "What a beauty you are Nelly!" she went on; "I can tell you so just as much as I like, and it wont make you vain. Your eyes are as blue as the sky, and your cheeks are as red as roses! I wonder if Roxy ever had a doll?" As Lily said this, she hugged Nelly close to her bosom, and a shadow crossed her brow. "I never can give *you* away;

never, to anybody. Papa gave you to me last Christmas, and I have loved you dearly ever since. It wouldn't be right for me to part with Nelly." She laid the doll upon the carpet, and turned away from it. "I wish mamma hadn't said if I wished to be generous, my gift must be something that I really value, and that I will miss when it is gone; there's nothing in the world I would miss so much as Nelly; and I haven't anything that Roxy would like so well to have. Oh, dear, dear, I don't know what I shall do."

Lily was on the point of weeping, but at this moment her mother called her, and she ran at once to see what was wanted.

Mrs. Kent was in the dressing-room, and preparing for a walk.

"Your papa has just sent me a note," she said, "giving me the number of the house where Roxy lives. He has called there this morning, and now I am going to see what can be done to help her and Andrew. You may go with me, if you like."

There was nothing that Lily enjoyed more than a walk with her parents or sister Hilary, and she skipped away for her cloak and hat, for a moment forgetting the conflict through which she was passing. It occurred to her again, just as she was ready to join her mother, but she tried to dismiss it by saying, "I won't carry anything to-day, I can tell better what she will like after I have seen her."

"But," whispered something in her heart, "you know that she would like Nelly."

"Yes, continued Lily, "but it is just as well to wait a day or two. I want time enough to make up my mind.

"The poor little girl is sick and lame ! how it would please her to hold Nelly in her arms, and know that she was all her own ; and you have everything pretty and nice around you, Lily, besides being well and strong, and able to walk wherever you please."

It was a faithful monitor that whispered these things, but Lily would not listen. She found her mother waiting in the hall, with a

little basket in her hand, and in a moment more, they were walking rapidly down the street in the direction of Mercer-lane.

"Mamma," said Lily, "Andrew Hall said that it would make me almost sick to see Roxy, because she was so lame, and her clothes were so ragged and dirty. Do you think it will?"

"No," replied Mrs. Kent. "It will very likely pain you to see a little girl of your own age who suffers so much; but you must make up your mind that it will be unpleasant, before hand."

"Have you got something for Roxy, in that basket, mamma?"

"Yes, some jelly and fruit, and a custard."

"I thought I wouldn't bring anything to-day, mamma," ventured Lily, "because I knew we would come again, and perhaps I should think of something she would like, after I had seen her to-day."

"How do you know that we shall come again, Lily?"

Mrs. Kent spoke very seriously.


"Why, because — why, you always go to see poor people more than once, mamma."

"Yes, and I hope to visit little Roxy many times, but of that I am not certain. We are only sure of the present opportunity, my child; and when it is past, it may be *forever*."

"Oh, dear, I hope not!" sighed Lily. "I never thought of that. I almost wish I had brought something to Roxy, to-day."

"It is too late for that now; for here we are in Mercer-lane, and Roxy's house is close by."

CHAPTER VIII.

OR a moment, as the door opened in answer to her mother's rap, Lily turned pale, and shrunk back, half afraid to enter the dark, dreary garret. There was no fire on the hearth.

Mrs. Hall stood with her hand on the door-latch, without speaking, and on the floor, close to the chimney, sat a child who could be none other than Roxy. Her little hands lay clasped together over her knees, and her eyes now eagerly searched the faces of the strangers, as they approached her.

"This must be Andrew's sister, Roxy," said Mrs. Kent, stooping and pushing back the light locks from the child's forehead.

At Andrew's name, Roxy's face brightened.

"Do you know *him*!" she ventured to ask.

"Yes, dear," replied Mrs. Kent, "and he told my little girl, Lily, about you, and she wanted to come and see you. Where is Andrew?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Mrs. Hall, to whom the question was addressed. "He's in the street most of the time, and never comes home if he can help it."

"I hoped to see him this morning," said Mrs. Kent, apparently taking no notice of the complaint implied in Mrs. Hall's answer. "I became quite interested in him last Sabbath morning, and want to see him again. Will you tell him when he comes in that I would like to have him come to my house next Sunday morning, and I will see that he has a nice breakfast, and Miss Hilary will play and sing for him?"

"Yes, I'll tell him, but he won't go," said Mrs. Hall. "Besides he isn't fit to be seen where there's decent people, and I can't get him any better clothes to wear. It's just as much as I can do to get a bit to keep Roxy and myself from starving."

“That reminds me that I have brought something for Roxy that I think she will like—some jelly and grapes, and a custard.”

Roxy's eyes brightened at the sight of such luxuries, and she held a bunch of rich purple grapes in her hands and surveyed them with great admiration.

“I never saw anything so pretty in my life,” she said to Lily, as Mrs. Kent turned to continue the conversation with her mother. “I mean to keep them to look at.”

“O, no, I wouldn't,” said Lily, “they are so nice to eat, and if you keep them long they will dry and wither, and not look so nice at all. I would eat them right up, if I were you.”

“What pretty things you wear,” said Roxy, letting her eyes rest for a moment upon Lily's blue cloak and hat, and the delicate furs that encircled her neck and wrists.

“I think they are pretty,” replied Lily. “My papa gave them to me.”

“He must be good and kind,” sighed Roxy.

"He is—just as good as he can be, and I love him dearly. Where is your papa, Roxy?"

Roxy shuddered.

"I don't know. He isn't good, and he don't love me at all."

"I should think he would," said Lily. "I should think he would hold you in his arms and rock you. Don't your back ache sitting there on the floor?"

"Yes, some; but I've got a nice pillow to my bed now, and it rests me ever so much. Mrs. Proctor was the woman that gave it to me. She is real good, and she sent me some broth yesterday for my dinner."

"Have you got any playthings?" Lily asked, almost in a whisper.

"Any what?" returned Roxy, surprised.

"Playthings; things to play with, and amuse yourself with."

"Oh!" said Roxy, and without another word she crept away on her hands and feet to her bed in the corner, and soon returned to

Lily, who had watched her with painful interest.

"I have got this," she said, holding up in her bony fingers a bit of glass that once had helped to ornament a chandelier. "You may take it, and hold it up to the light, and you'll see lots of colors in it. Ain't it real pretty," she added, when Lily handed it back to her. "Andrew brought it home, and when he got tired of it he gave it to me ; so I keep it under my bed, where my father can't get it, for it is so pretty he'd want to sell it if he knew I had it."

"Have you got a doll," asked Lily, her voice trembling a little.

"No ; what is a doll ?"

Lily looked at her in utter astonishment ; it seemed the strangest thing in the world to see a girl eight years old who did not know what a doll was ; when that feeling had subsided, she replied, "Why, a doll is like a baby, only not quite as large ; and it has a face, and hands and feet, and you can undress

and dress it, and play with it any way you like."

"Is it alive?" asked Roxy, meekly.

"No, indeed; its body is made of kid, and its head, and arms, and legs are china; and it has a blue silk frock, and a velvet hat with a white feather, and a blue velvet cloak trimmed with fur; besides that, it has a ball dress of white muslin, with a lace berthe, and flounces; and a white night-gown and cap, trimmed with tatten." Thus Lily almost unconsciously described her own Nelly and her wardrobe to the little cripple, who listened with eager eyes and half open mouth to the wonderful story.

"O, I wish I could see her just a minute!" she exclaimed in the first pause, when Lily stopped to take breath. "I should like to take her in my arms a minute. I wish I had a doll of my own."

"I wish you had," said Lily. "Perhaps next time I come to see you I will bring my Nelly with me, and if I do, you may hold her

as long as I stay." Lily had more than half a mind to say, "I will give her to you for your own, to keep always," but the words died upon her tongue. Roxy, however, was delighted at the prospect of seeing the wonderful creature, and asked numberless questions in regard to her, that Lily took much pleasure in answering, because, when talking, she could not hear the troublesome little voice that still persisted in whispering to her heart.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Kent drew from Mrs. Hall something of her past history and present wants; a dreary catalogue these latter, and apparently not to be supplied, for the miserable husband never failed to dispose of everything the house afforded, to gratify his passion for strong drink.

"So we must do the best we can," sighed Mrs. Hall. "T'wont be any better so long as Bill lives, and it is no use to try to do anything for us, as I told Mrs. Proctor the other day. I wish it was more comfortable for that poor young one; it's harder for her than it is for me, for she's always ailing."

"Can nothing be done to help her?" asked Mrs. Kent.

"No. I got the doctor to look at her once, three or four years ago, and he said she never would be well, whatever was done for her. He told me she must have nourishing food and good air, but it is precious little she gets of either."

"Poor child!" said Mrs. Kent. "Is she quiet and patient?"

"Quiet enough," replied the mother. "She daresn't scarcely breathe when Bill is at home, and I a'n't over-fond of hearing whining myself; besides, it wouldn't help her to cry and make a fuss; she's just as well off to keep still."

"Poor child!" again sighed Mrs. Kent; and this time she stooped and tenderly kissed the wan cheek, while tears filled her eyes.

"Do you love Jesus, Roxy?" she asked, still bending over her.

"I don't know who Jesus is," replied Roxy.

"He is the Friend and Saviour of little

children. He took them in his arms and blessed them when he lived upon the earth."

"Where is he now?" asked Roxy.

"He is in heaven."

"Where is heaven?"

"It is a beautiful and happy home where all who love Jesus will go when they die, and live with him forever."

"Is it anything like this?" whispered Roxy, looking around on the bare walls and smoky ceiling of her cheerless home.

"No, dear child. Everything there is bright and beautiful. It is never cold or stormy in that blessed place, and the inhabitants never say I am sick; and God wipes away the tears from all faces."

Roxy raised her thin hands, and drew Mrs. Kent's face closer down to hers, and whispered hesitatingly, "Can you get a place for me in heaven? I want to go there?"

"Jesus will prepare a place for you there, little one, if you will ask him. You cannot see him, but he can see you all the time, and he can hear all that you say. Do not be

afraid to ask him, for he loves you and will take care of you."

"Does he see me all the time, in the dark, dark nights, when mother is asleep?"

"Yes, dear. It is he who takes care of you, and watches over you. He never sleeps."

"Andrew told me it was a star that I see shining up in the sky every night, but it is Jesus looking down at me, isn't it?"

"No; but he made the bright stars, and he keeps them in their places. I must go now, Roxy, but I hope I may come again and tell you more about the Saviour. It will make you very happy to love him and trust him. Do you love *me*, Roxy?"

"O, yes," and the child's soft eyes filled with tears. "I wish I could see you all the time."

"That is not possible, but Jesus has always loved you ever since you were a little baby, and he has always taken care of you. *He* will never, never leave you nor forsake you, if you will ask him to bless you. And now, my little girl, good-bye."


Roxy crept away to her bed, when Mrs. Kent and Lily were gone, and laid her head upon the pillow. Many were the thoughts that thronged her brain, but among them all there was one sweeter than all the rest; it was the thought of that happy home where Jesus dwelt, and where she longed to go, away from all hunger, and cold, and sickness, and fear.

Her mother, sitting by the hearth, heard the faint little voice murmur—

“Jesus, I can’t see you, but you can see me. Will you make a place for me in heaven, for I want to go and live there, for I am sick, and so tired, *so tired!*”

It was little Roxy’s first prayer, and it was not worded like the prayers that tender mother’s teach the happy children at their knees, but who shall say that it had not as sweet a sound as theirs in the ear of the great Shepherd; nay, sweeter, for it was the breathing of a soul first awakened to a sense of its wants and its dependence.

CHAPTER IX.

NDREW HALL spent the week after his introduction to the mission school, very much as he had always done, wandering about the streets and wharves, lingering at the doors of low drinking saloons, begging food and pence at the houses of the rich ; swearing, disputing, and fighting with his idle and vicious companions ; and thus daily hardening himself in sin. Sometimes during the week, a thought of Miss Hilary's fair face and sweet songs, of little Lily's affectionate words and sympathy for his lame sister, of Mr. Wallace's kindness, and Mrs. Laurie's pleasant stories, flashing through his mind like the recollection of pleasant dreams, awakened a faint desire for something better and higher than this low, idle life. Why

might not he go to work ; he was old enough and strong for his years ; why might not he earn money and dress in clean, whole clothes, instead of filthy rags ? But these thoughts and desires were fleeting ; the first word from an old companion, the first chance for a frolic, drove them away.

Sunday morning Roxy awoke quite early, and lay very still, with her eyes fixed upon the bit of blue sky above her head. She was thinking of Jesus and heaven, for since Mrs. Kent's visit, these themes had constantly occupied her mind ; and the Holy Spirit, in answer to her simple, but earnest and often repeated prayer, was enlightening her ignorance, and revealing to her things which are "hidden from the wise and prudent." As she lay thus, suffering in body, but with sweetest peace in her heart, Andrew awoke, and springing up from the bare floor, looked around for his cap. Roxy had been waiting for this, and called in a voice scarcely more than a whisper,

"Andy, look here, a minute."

He heard her, and came softly to her bedside. "What d'ye want? Speak quick, for I'm in a hurry."

"Don't wake up father, Andy. To-day is Sunday, a'n't it, Andy?"

"I guess so; what of it?"

"You know Mrs. Kent wanted you to go to her house to day; wont you go?"

"No, I wont, and there's the end of it. What's the use?" he added more gently, for Roxy's eyes filled with tears.

"What does she want with me?"

"O, she's so good, Andy."

"Well, she's nothing to make her bad," was Andrew's reply. "She has everything she wants, and plenty of money. I a'n't going near her, so you needn't say anything more about it."

"She said Miss Hilary would sing to you," Roxy ventured to add; "and you liked to hear her sing; you said you did, Andy."

"I know that, but there's a good many things I like and can't have." As he spoke,

he turned to go, but Roxy held him with a trembling hand a moment longer.

"What makes them call to-day, Sunday?" she asked.

"How should I know?" replied Andrew, impatiently. "I don't know any reason, unless it's because the bells ring and people go to meeting and Sunday School."

"Do you go, Andy?"

"No, nor I don't want to; what's the use? Folks that go to meeting dress up in fine clothes; they don't wear rags like me."

"But what's a Sunday School," persisted Roxy.

"Why, it's a place where boys and girls sing, and a man talks, sometimes with his eyes shut, and sometimes with 'em open; and they have teachers, and the teachers tell kind of stories; and that's all I know about it."

"Did you ever see a Sunday School, Andy?"

"Yes, once; last Sunday," replied Andrew, jerking away his coat from Roxy's slender grasp. "I wish you'd let me alone; I can't spend my time here," he added, gruffly.

"What are you going to do to-day, Andy?"

"None of your business;" and the boy flung himself away, without glancing at Roxy's face. On the stairs, the thought of her, lying pale and sick, in the dark corner, flashed across him, and he turned back, and stole very softly to her side. Her eyes were closed, and he heard her say, scarcely above her breath, "Dear Jesus, will you take care of Andy, and make a place in heaven for him, too? for I love Andy."

Softly as he came, Andrew retreated. Not for the world would he have had Roxy know that he heard her; not for the world would he have had her see the sob that he choked back, and the great tear that he brushed away with his ragged sleeve; but the prayer followed him all that day, and made him more uncomfortable than he had ever been in his life. He wandered listlessly up and down the streets of the city until the bells began to ring; then screening himself from observation as much as possible, he waited near the church

which he had seen Lily and Miss Hilary enter on the preceding Sabbath. He would have been at a loss to give a reason for this, and would doubtless have been ashamed had any one of his street companions discovered him; but there he stood, with his large black eyes eagerly seaching the groups of people as they came up the street, until they fell upon the two figures, which he was quick to recognize. How fresh, and fair, and pure they looked; Miss Hilary and Lily walking, hand in hand, and talking so cheerfully together. Andrew would have given anything to have had a smile from either, but there was no chance of his getting it, so long as he stood concealed from their sight, and he was ashamed to meet them, after leaving the house so abruptly the previous Sunday. He watched them until they entered the church, and then went away.

Should he go down to the mission school, as Mr. Wallace and Mrs. Laurie had urged him to? This was the question that now presented itself for settlement.

In the first place, what would Sam James and Jack Carter say, if they knew that he thought of such a thing? They would laugh at and ridicule him, and very likely give him some nickname. Perhaps they would exclude him from their party in their next frolic, and nothing he would hear in Sunday School, not even the singing, would make up such a loss as that! So he thought in his foolishness, poor boy! But then, on the other hand, there was Roxy—Roxy who had asked Jesus to make a place for him in heaven; how pleased she would be to know that he really went to the Sunday School, and for her sake, after he had spoken so crossly to her about it. Certainly there was no harm in going just once more; he never need go again; besides, the air was sharp and stinging, and the warmth of the hall would not be at all uncomfortable to his chilled limbs and aching fingers. As Andrew walked along, while thus revolving the subject, he now found himself near the door of the school-room, where a group of

boys were assembled as on the previous Sunday, waiting for their superintendent. They were a rough looking set of fellows, all of them about Andrew's age, and they surveyed him with considerable curiosity, as he approached.

"Hullo! Rag Bag!" shouted one, by way of salutation, and the others joined in his rude laugh.

Andrew's face reddened with anger, and doubling his fist he dealt a sudden blow, that sent the lad reeling back against the fence.

"Go it, Rag Bag!" "Go it!" "Hurrah for a knock down!" shouted one voice after another. "Pay him back, Mike." "Hit him again." "Show your pluck, old boy?"

Mike was not slow in recovering himself, and pushing his sleeves above his elbows, with a terrible oath he ordered Andrew to "come on." No further invitation was required, for Andrew's blood was boiling with anger, and he wanted to show at the outset, that although he wore ragged clothes, no one

should be suffered to remind him of the fact, without sufficient punishment.

In the midst of the sharp encounter that followed, Mr. Wallace suddenly appeared, and seizing the two boys by their arms, held them as in a vice, in spite of their vigorous attempts to release themselves.

"What does this mean," he asked sternly.

"He struck me in my face, and I wont stand it from anybody."

"He called me names; and they all laughed at me."

"And so you fought over it!" This was all that Mr. Wallace said, but he led the two boys up stairs, whither the others had gone at his first appearance, and put them in their seats. Andrew would not look up, in answer to Mrs. Laurie's salutation. The blood was flowing from his nose, and he was, altogether, a most sorry spectacle, but no one dared to laugh at him in the presence of Mr. Wallace. Mrs. Laurie passed him her handkerchief, but he would not take it; it was too white and deli-

cate for him; the rough sleeve of his jacket soon stopped the blood, and as he listened to the hymn that was sung, his anger and mortification subsided, and softer feelings took their place.

Mrs. Laurie asked Andrew to stop a moment after school was dismissed, and when no one was within hearing, she said to him as on the last Sunday, "You will come again next Sabbath, wont you?"

"No," said Andrew, decidedly, "I shan't come any more."

"Why, what is the reason? Don't you like the school?"

"Yes; well enough."

"Perhaps you would prefer another teacher? If you would, I will speak to Mr. Wallace, and —"

"No," interrupted Andrew, "I don't want any other teacher, but I a'n't coming any more."

"You must do as you choose, of course," said Mrs. Laurie; "but really, Andrew, I

should like to know why you will not come. I want you to come very much indeed."

Andrew stood with his face half hidden by his cap, twisting his fingers uneasily together.

"Perhaps I might guess," suggested Mrs. Laurie.

"You needn't," said Andrew; "I wont come here to be called 'Rag Bag,' and be made fun of by other fellows, and that's the end of it."

"I don't blame you at all for not wishing to be called by such a name, I am sure," said Mrs. Laurie, kindly. "No one would like it; but then you *do* look rather ragged, there's no denying that."

"I know it," said Andrew, reddening to the roots of his hair, "and I'd no business to have come in the first place; but *he*," pointing at Mr. Wallace, "said it was no matter if my jacket was torn."

"And so it is not, compared with some other things, such as your not going to Sunday School at all," replied Mrs. Laurie. "But now, Andrew, I want to tell you that I thought


of you a number of times last week, and I knew that you needed some better clothes, so that when you came in here, you might feel just as respectable as any one. So I went to work, and I have made you a jacket, and I have got a pair of pants, and a pair of shoes, and a cap, on purpose for you to wear, if you will only come here, and let me teach you every Sunday morning. Now, will you come?"

This was such a kindness as Andrew was quite incapable of understanding. Why should this lady, so well dressed and grand looking, care so much to have him come to Sunday School? He glanced up at her, and his eyes asked the question that his lips refused to utter. Mrs. Laurie answered it :

"It is because you have a soul that will live long, long after your body has crumbled into dust, and I want you to be happy in heaven. Will you come?"

"Yes," said Andrew, "I will come."

CHAPTER X.

T was Christmas morning, and thousands of happy homes were made happier still by the joyous greetings, and kindly wishes befitting the season. Even the dwellings of the poor were to-day brightened and gladdened by the bit of evergreen in the window, and the simple treat, provided at the cost of extra labor and self-denial, on the part of hard-working parents, for the sake of their children. How strange it is, that in the thousands of feasts spread, the gifts exchanged, the kind greetings uttered, so many forget Him, the anniversary of whose birth they celebrate, and keep back from Him the one gift for which he asks ; the love and devotion of the heart !

Little Roxy and her wants had not been forgotten by her new friends at this happy

time. On Christmas eve, Mr. Proctor's man had left a basket of good things at the garret-door, enough for a nice dinner for them all, if only the husband and father would keep sober, and enjoy it with them, instead of filling the room with brutal threats and oaths! Mrs. Kent had sent a thick woolen wrapper for Roxy, and another basket of fruit, with the word, that she and Lily hoped to call on the morrow; and Mrs. Laurie had come herself with a book of colored pictures for the lame child, and, waiting by the little bed, she had told her the sweet Christmas story of the birth of Jesus, and the new star that shone in the East. And now the glad morning had come, and Roxy, with her little book lying open on her lap, was as happy a child as could have been found in all the city. She saw her mother go out on a half hour's errand without uttering a word of regret, although she must remain alone, for she had her book, and many new and beautiful thoughts to occupy her mind. Besides, since Mrs. Kent had

told her of the Saviour, and how he was always present to watch over and guard his children, she had felt a peace in her own heart, that took every fear away ; it was " that peace passing understanding," over which the world has no power. It was a bitterly cold morning, and the heavy, leaden clouds betokened a storm ere many hours passed ; but what matter for that, since a bright, warm fire glowed in the grate, which was so often empty ? Roxy's heart was so overflowing with joy, that she hummed a little song, to give some expression to her gladness ; it had no words, for no one had ever taught Roxy sweet hymns of praise, but it was a tune she had often heard Andrew whistle. While she was singing, the door opened and her father came in, with a step more steady than was usual with him. In an instant the child's voice was mute, and Roxy, slipping her beautiful picture book under her pillow, lay perfectly still, hoping to escape his notice. But he had observed her quick gesture, and, seeing that she was

alone in the room, now approached her low bed, and stood looking fiercely down upon her white, frightened face.

"Let's see what you hid away there." This was the command that Roxy was compelled to obey. She drew the book from under her pillow and silently handed it to him. He turned over a leaf or two, examined the prettily ornamented covers, and with a grin of satisfaction, slipped it into his coat-pocket; then he said gruffly, and with many oaths, which we will omit, "You're dressed up mighty fine! Suppose you just take off that gown; I want to look at it."

Poor Roxy felt the tears coming, but she bravely kept them back, and silently obeyed. Her father turned the pretty new garment over and over in his hands, muttering to himself meanwhile:

"Two dollars, if it's worth a cent! Two dollars; and the book; well, say fifty cents; not a bad speculation for one morning. Where did you get 'em, Rox?"

"Mrs. Laurie gave me the book, and Mrs. Kent gave me the gown," said Roxy, in a tremulous voice.

Her father stood looking down upon her for a few minutes in silence. When at length he spoke, it was to order her to get up, and find a shawl or bonnet to put over her head. Roxy looked up in his hard, cruel face, and said in a frightened whisper, "I ha'n't got a shawl nor a bonnet. Where am I going? Mayn't I wait till mother comes?"

"You're going to earn your living, you lazy, whining, good-for-nothing. You'd ought to be ashamed; lying here day in and day out, for me to take care of, when you might be bringing something. Here, take this old piece of blanket, and pin it over your head; it's better'n a shawl, and hurry yourself so as to get out of the way before any of your new friends come to see you. They might think it too cold for a fine lady like you to go out to-day."

Roxy tremblingly obeyed her father's direc-

tions, without venturing another word. When the blanket was securely fastened over her long, tangled hair, and thin shoulders, he took her up in his arms.

"I suppose I've got to carry you, heavy as you are, poor, miserable brat!" he said, angrily. "I don't see what such things are made for, except it is to aggravate."

Roxy involuntarily shrink away from his touch, and this angered him still more.

"What are ye 'fraid of?" he cried, shaking her arm; "hold on to my shoulder, or I'll let ye fall down the stairs and break every bone in your body! Now I'll tell ye what I'm going to have ye do, and where I'm going to carry you," he went on, as he hurried up the street; "I'm going to leave you on the steps of a big meeting-house, where there's to be a meeting to-day, because it's Christmas. When the grand folks come up the steps, you are to put out your hand and ask for money; tell some pitiful story, that your father and mother are dead, or anything else you can think of;

though to be sure there a'n't much need of your speaking, when you look so awfully yourself."

"Shall I stay there all alone?" asked poor Roxy; "and it is very cold, it makes me sick it is so cold."

"I guess you wont be very lonesome," sneered her father; "there'll be folks enough going by all the time, and as for the cold, I'll warrant you wont freeze. So shut up your head. I've heard enough of your talk for once."

Thus admonished, Roxy spoke not another word, but the tears stole quietly down her cheeks.

Arriving at the church door, just as the bells were ringing, Bill Hall put his burthen down upon the steps, where none could fail to see her.

"Now mind you make your story pitiful enough," was his parting injunction, "and when I'm ready, I'll come and get you, and carry you home, and if you have earned

enough, you shall have a good supper, but if you haven't, I'll send you to bed without a mouthful; so mind."

Roxy watched until he was out of sight, and then her sobs burst forth; the blanket, that partly covered her head and shoulders, was very thin, and the sharp air penetrated it, sending cold shivers over her frame; added to this, the snow began to fall in large flakes, directly in her face, and she was so frightened, that she did not dare to raise her eyes, or speak to the people, who were now hurrying past her into the church. And they — God forgive them! — so accustomed to the sight of beggars, gave scarcely a single glance at the little, silent, crouching figure, but went in to worship and praise him who, although the King of Glory, humbled himself to be born of a virgin, in the manger at Bethlehem. Roxy sat perfectly still, and a numbness began to creep over her limbs; suddenly a joyous peal from the grand organ came ringing out upon the frosty air, and sweet voices sang "Glory

to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to man."

"It is heaven!" thought Roxy, closing her eyes, and a smile, soft and serene, settled on her white thin face. Thoughts of Jesus, the dear Shepherd, filled her heart, and she longed, oh! how earnestly, for her place to be made ready in the happy land, so that she might go thither and be at rest. The music died away, rose again, sweeter and clearer than before in the glad strains of the glorious *Te Deum*, and again died away, and Roxy slept. Dreams of heaven, of Jesus, and of the angels, floated through her brain, and all sense of cold and pain was gone. Faster and faster fell the feathery snow, covering her slender figure with a mantle of white, and the gusts of wind blew her light curls about her face, and loosened the blanket from her shoulders, but Roxy no longer felt the cold.

The service was over, and the eager throng poured out from the church, intent upon the pleasures of the day, and almost pushing the

child's figure from the cold granite step in their haste. Happy children, clad in rich furs, and soft, warm garments, turned not to gaze into that wan and pallid face, but skipped along with dancing steps, and bright eyes, in glad anticipation of pleasures awaiting them; while mothers, clasping fast the little palms in their gloved hands, smiled down upon them, nor cast a single pitying glance at the unconscious form, over which the white snow was drifting. Thus, nearly every worshipper had passed out of the consecrated place, and soon the doors would be closed, and Roxy left in silence and alone. Alone, did I say! Ah, no! for he, whose loving eye watches over all, and who notices even the sparrow's fall, was near to guard that little, unprotected head. Roxy was not *alone*, and even now he was sending to her side a friend to help her.

Mrs. Laurie had lingered in the church until it was deserted by all but the old sexton. Christmas time, so full of joy and mirth to others, was a season of sacred peace to her;

peace, which had come after the deepest anguish and bereavement.

Four years ago, and all was sunshine in her pleasant home; sweet, childish voices, and the patter of little feet made music in the house, and there was a strong and tender arm, upon which she hoped to lean all her life long. But God saw, that her heart was clinging too closely to this frail support, and forgetting the only true Rest, and so he took away from her "the desire of her eyes with a stroke," leaving her desolate. Another year passed away, another Christmas came, and deeper shadows settled about her path, for her first-born child and her youngest darling lay side by side in one coffin, awaiting their burial. Deep, indeed, were the waters through which this soul passed; but there was one whose kind hand was stretched out to save her from sinking; and now, though life was no longer joyous as in other days, Mrs. Laurie could sing with unfaltering accents:

“Though like a wanderer,
Daylight all gone,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.”

One child, little Charley, was left her, and to his training, and deeds of love and charity, she devoted her time and attention.

Mrs. Laurie, as we have said, lingered in the church until it was empty, in the attitude of prayer. There was something so soothing in the solemn stillness, that, but for the thought of her boy, waiting for her at home, she would gladly have passed the entire day within its walls. Rising, at length, she drew her veil over her face, and left the church. The storm was rapidly increasing in violence, and people hurried along the street with bowed heads, while gusts of wind swept sharper from the northeast. Mrs. Laurie paused a moment in the vestibule, and in this moment her eye fell upon the snow-covered figure of a child, lying motionless upon the granite steps. She stooped over it and tenderly whispered :

"Why are you here, little one?" No answer came from the stiff, purple lips, and the heavy lids lay motionless on the waxen cheeks. Mrs. Laurie pushed the light hair away from her brow, and with her handkerchief wiped the snow from the clasped hands and pallid face. Surely she had seen those pinched features before! and the shrunken limbs; this was not the first time they had silently appealed to her pity. She looked more intently, and exclaimed:


"It is Andrew Hall's sister! It is little Roxy Hall!"



"It is little Roxy Hall."—P. 116.



CHAPTER XI.

HY don't aunt Jenny and cousin Charley come?" sighed Lily Kent, impatiently, as she stood with her face pressed up against the drawing-room window. "Mamma, what do you suppose is the reason?"

"I don't know, my dear. You have asked Hilary and myself the same question half a dozen times within the last half hour. I think you had better amuse yourself with your new books, instead of watching for your aunt and cousin." Thus admonished, Lily left the window, and for about five minutes bent over the little table on which were spread her Christmas presents. But her thoughts refused to centre on them, beautiful as they were, and she soon returned to the

window, and resumed her former position in silence.

"There is Donald, mamma!" she cried, at length. "Oh, I'm afraid something has happened and aunt Jenny cannot come. Wont it be too bad?"

Taylor came in in a moment with a note from Mrs Laurie, which required an answer. Mrs. Kent read it aloud to Hilary and Lily. It was as follows :

"DEAR SISTER:—

Little Roxy Hall, in whom we have felt so much interest, is under my roof—I fear—dying. I found her on the church steps an hour since, and brought her home. Dr. Maxwell is here, but we have not as yet been able to restore her to consciousness, and he apprehends the worst. You will see that I cannot be with you to-day, and as Charley is not very well. I think it best to keep him at home. I regret this on Lily's account, but she would not wish me to leave poor little Roxy, I am sure. I have sent word to Mrs. Hall that her child is here, though one who would suffer such a sickly creature to be exposed to such a storm as this, can scarcely feel anxiety in regard to her. Will you ask brother Walter to go to

their miserable home, and if Andrew is there, persuade him to come and see Roxy. Her death may have a softening influence upon him, and I cannot but feel a deep interest in the wayward boy. In haste,

Your's truly,

JENNY LAURIE."

Mr. Kent readily promised to go in search of Andrew, and Donald was dismissed.

Lily, who had listened to her aunt's letter, now silently left the room, and went up to her own little chamber, with a heavy heart. She threw herself upon her low couch, and burst into a flood of bitter tears. It was not because she was disappointed of her day's expected pleasure, though ordinarily this would have been a severe trial, but conscience reproached her, and conscience is a terrible reprovcr.

"Oh, if I had only carried my Nelly, and given her to Roxy that day when mamma and I went to see her!" she sobbed. "It would have made her so happy, and now she is going to die, and I can never, never do

anything for her again! Oh, I am selfish! Mamma says that I am, and I know it. I wish I had carried my doll to Roxy. I am afraid I shall never be happy again."

Hilary, who had come to her room for some trifle, overheard her little sister's deep sobs, and opening the door went in and sat down beside her, and drew the pretty curly head to her bosom, saying tenderly—

"Why, Lily, darling, what is the trouble?"

"Oh, I am so unhappy, Hilary," sobbed Lily, clinging close to her sister's neck. "I was selfish and wouldn't give my Nelly to poor Roxy, and now Roxy is going to die, and I can't do anything to make her happy, ever again."

"Did mamma wish you to give her your doll?"

"She didn't say so, but she told me if I wanted to be generous I must give away something that I would miss, and would like to keep myself, and that made me think of my Nelly, for I knew Roxy couldn't help

liking such a beauty, and there was nothing of my own that I would miss so much; and then it seemed to me that I could not give her up at any rate; so I went with mamma, and did not carry her anything at all, because I said I would make up my mind afterwards what I would give her. And now, she is going to die, Hilary! Oh, dear, I don't know what to do." Lily sobbed as though her heart would break, and Hilary tried to think what she could say to comfort her.

"You would not have felt so badly, Lily," she said presently, "if you had not heard of Roxy's illness, would you?"

"I guess not," replied Lily, "because I kept thinking I would do something for her, until now—it is too late."

"But my dear Lily," said Hilary, "if Roxy should die, do not you see that this will be a lesson to you; a sad lesson, it is true, but one that you will not soon forget? Will it not teach my little sister to deny herself for the sake of others, and not to put off until another time what she ought to do at once?"

"Oh, yes," sighed Lily, "I do hope I will never be selfish any more. I wish I had given her my Nelly, but I can't help it now. I shall never see Nelly again without thinking of Roxy."

"You will never become generous and self-denying, darling, by only hoping or wishing to be so," said Hilary, kissing the flushed cheek, that lay close to her own. "There is but one way to overcome sinful dispositions and habits."

"I know," said Lily, quickly, "it is only Jesus that can help me, but I never asked him to make me generous. Do you think I ought, sister?"

"Why, yes, indeed. Nothing that troubles or tries us is too small or trifling to bring to our dear Saviour in prayer."

Lily sat thinking for several minutes, while her sobs grew fainter and less frequent. At length she slipped from Hilary's arms and fell upon her knees, whispering—

"Hilary, will you ask Jesus for me?"

"Oh, yes," said Hilary, "but you must also ask for yourself every day, Lily. My prayers will not take the place of yours."

"I shall not forget—I am sure I shall never forget to ask him, and I hope he will please to hear me."

"He surely will, my dear. Jesus never turns away from any who sincerely seek him. Do you remember the beautiful hymn which says—

' Jesus listens when I pray,
He will wash my sins away,
He will make me pure and mild,
He will bless a little child;
I will go to him—nor fear.
For he loves my prayer to hear.

I have often left the fold,
And in valleys lone and cold
Wandered weary and alone,
Seeking rest and finding none.
Jesus, Shepherd, I implore
Let me stray away no more.' "

"Never fear, Lily, that the Good Shepherd will refuse to listen to the prayers of his lambs."

"But, sister Hilary," said Lily, hesitatingly,

"I am afraid that I am not one of his lambs. I want to be, I *really* want to be, sometimes; and then, I forget all about it, and the first I know, I am doing something naughty, or speaking impatiently. Oh, dear, I wish I were good like you! Do you think, Hilary, that you ever wandered away into 'the valleys dark and cold?'"

"Yes, darling, many, many times?" said Hilary, sighing, "but, Lily, it is my greatest desire to stay within the fold. It is so sweet to feel that Jesus is near to care for, and guard us; and that he will never, never leave the lambs of his flock to perish."

"I wonder if Roxy loves him," said Lily, suddenly. "Mamma told her about him, and about heaven, when we were there, and she wanted mamma to get a place for her in heaven. She didn't seem to know anything about Jesus; but how could she, Hilary, if no one had ever told her? Don't you think Jesus loves her?"


"I am sure that he does," answered Hilary,

"for his love is so great that it takes in all the world. He has ways of teaching poor ignorant little ones that we know nothing about, and if little Roxy, when she heard of heaven, wanted to go thither, I can't help thinking that the dear Saviour took the wish for a prayer, and when she dies will receive her there. But you, dear Lily," continued Hilary, "you are not ignorant; you have been taught, ever since you were old enough to understand anything, your duty to God. When you were a very small baby, papa and mamma gave you to him. Your privileges have been far greater than Roxy's; and therefore you will be called to give a more strict account. Dear little sister, if you sometimes fear that you are not one of the lambs of Christ's flock, let this holy Christmas day, be the time when you shall most earnestly pray that he will make you one. You are not too young to be a Christian, Lily."

"I know it, Hilary," and Lily raised her earnest face, "and I will ask him, with all my heart."

So the two sisters knelt side by side, and prayed for God's blessing. It was a hallowed hour, and one which they will remember with joy through the long ages of eternity.

CHAPTER XII.

S this heaven?" asked Roxy, where after lying motionless for nearly two hours she slowly opened her eyes, and looked about her.

"Is this heaven!"

"No, dear," said Mrs. Laurie, bending over her with a sweet smile. "It is not heaven, but perhaps you may soon be in that beautiful place."

"It can't be beautifuller than this," said Roxy, faintly. "It was so cold, and now it is warm; I was so frightened to be left all alone, but I ain't frightened now; thought I saw Jesus coming down through the snow, and he took me in his arms, and carried me away where the sun shined and birds were singing, and there were sweet, white flowers

all in full bloom, and then I forgot what happened next ; but this *must* be heaven.

Mrs. Laurie held a cordial to Roxy's pale lips, and said gently,

" You have been very sick, Roxy, and I want you to lie still now. The doctor says you must be very quiet, and not talk any more at present. Shut your eyes, dear, and try to sleep."

Roxy would have obeyed, but it was impossible where all was so strange and beautiful. The pretty paper on the walls, the bright carpet that covered the floor, the full window draperies, the easy chairs and lounges, the vases of flowers upon the table and mantle-piece, the wreaths of evergreen, and the bright plumaged bird that warbled in its gilded cage, the fine engravings and books that hung from the walls and filled two or three book racks, all these things claimed the attention of the wondering child, and, exhausted as she was, prevented her sleeping.

"She cannot live long, ma'am," said Rebecca, Charley's nurse, in a whisper to Mrs. Laurie. "Don't you see the light in her eyes is so bright, it almost scorches one to look at her, and her poor little fingers picking away at the blankets? I've seen a good deal of sickness and death in my day, and I'm sure the child is near gone; so let her talk, ma'am, if she will, and don't bother her by telling her to keep still."

But Roxy was quiet for some minutes, and apparently contented and happy to lie still, so long as Mrs. Laurie's cool, soft hand rested on her burning forehead.

"It is not necessary for me to remain with you longer," said Doctor Maxwell, who had watched Roxy in silence for more than an hour. "Rebecca is right. The child may live the day out, but no longer, I think. You have only to make her comfortable."

"Then there is no hope of her recovery?" asked Mrs. Laurie.

"None, whatever, madam," replied the doc-

tor. "Even without this last exposure she could have lived but a short time. It will be a mercy when she breathes her last, poor sufferer!" He left the room as he spoke, and Roxy, turning her head towards Mrs. Laurie, fixed her blue eyes upon her face, and said softly, "I wish I could see Andy. I want to tell him something."

"I hope he will soon be here, said Mrs. Laurie. "I thought you would like to see him, and he has been sent for."

"Did you send for my mother, too?"

"I sent her word that you were here and sick, and I think she will come to see you."

"Andy has been real good to me, and so has mother, *almost always*. I wish Andy would love Jesus, so as to have a place in heaven."

"I hope he will, Roxy."

"I am going to ask him to promise me to go to your Sunday School all the time, so that he may learn how to be good; and you'll help him, wont you, because you're so kind to me, and he is my brother?"

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Laurie, fervently. "I will do all that is in my power for Andy, for your sake, as well as for his own."

Roxy looked her thanks, and laid her small fingers caressingly on Mrs. Laurie's hand.

"It hurts me to talk right here," she whispered, laying her free hand upon her chest. "It never hurt me so before. I wish the pain would go away."

"It will not last long, dear child," said Mrs. Laurie. "Jesus will help you bear it patiently, if you ask him, and soon, very soon, all your pains will be over, and you will be happy with him."

"O, I am glad!" cried Roxy, with a bright smile. "I want to see him, and have him take me in his arms just as he used to take little children when he lived here; then I shan't ever be sick any more. What do little children do up in heaven?"

"I cannot tell you, only they are very happy, and I suppose they sing together, and Jesus teaches them many beautiful things

that they would never learn on this sinful earth."

"I will learn to sing, then," said Roxy, joyfully. "I do love to hear singing. O, I heard such sweet music when I was sitting on the cold steps. It was loud, and it made me want to cry, I was so happy! Can you sing?"

"Yes, dear; shall I sing to you?"

Roxy nodded her head, and as the sweet strains of the beautiful hymn,

"Jesus, lover of my soul,"

fell upon her ear, her eyelids closed, and she fell into a light slumber. Mrs. Laurie kept on singing until Rebecca, who had left the room, now returned, followed by some one who seemed loth to enter."

"Come along," said the woman encouragingly. "You needn't be afraid. The little girl wants to see you."

Thus urged, Andrew Hall came in, and, with his cap in his hand, his hair falling over his face, and his eyes cast down, stood before his Sunday School teacher, who greeted him kindly.

"O, Andy!" cried Roxy, roused by the opening of the door and the interruption of the singing, "I'm real glad you've come. I'm going to heaven. Did you know it, Andy?"

Andrew did not speak, neither did he raise his eyes; he was afraid to look in his little sister's face, for Rebecca had told him she was dying, and he was frightened.

"Ain't mother coming to see me?" asked Roxy. "Don't she know that I'm going to heaven?"

"They told her you were sick," replied Andrew, scarcely above a whisper; "but she a'n't coming, I guess."

"Why not?" asked Roxy.

"She's been drinking, and so's father, till they can't stir."

"O, dear! I wish they wouldn't. Andy, wont you come here a minute? I want to ask you something."

Andrew approached the couch on which Roxy lay, and sat down upon a cricket that Rebecca had placed for him.

"Father had been drinking when he carried me to the church steps to beg," said Roxy.

"I know it," cried Andrew, clutching his hands together, while his brown cheeks flushed with anger. "I know it, and if you die, Roxy, he's done it; that's all?"

"It was rum that made him, Andy. It is rum that makes him beat mother and you, and frighten us all so, isn't it?"

"I guess so. Yes it is. It makes him most crazy."

"When I go to heaven I can't talk to you, Andy. Not till you come there, too. Shan't you miss me a little?"

"Yes," said Andrew. He tried to say something else, but his voice choked.

"I thought you would," said Roxy, smiling; "but I'm going to learn to sing, and I shall be happy all the time, and never have any more pain. I want you to promise me two things, Andy, before I go. Will you?" .

The boy bowed his head, and dashed his hand across his eyes.

"I want you to promise to go to Mrs. Laurie's Sunday School every Sunday, so that she may tell you about Jesus. Will you, Andy?"

"Yes, I will," said Andrew.

"O, I'm so glad!" exclaimed Roxy; then glancing at Mrs. Laurie, she added, "and you'll be real good to him, wont you?"

"I will try to be, certainly," said Mrs. Laurie.

"And if he's naughty, you wont scold him, as mother does?"

"No, dear, I hope not."

"It makes him mad to be scolded or whipped; don't it, Andy?"

He made no reply to this question, and Roxy proceeded in a still more earnest voice:

"I want you to promise me, Andy, that you never will drink another drop of whiskey or rum, or anything else that makes people drunk." She paused, and looked steadily in her brother's face, but Andrew was silent.

"Wont you promise me?" she asked again,

in a tone of melting pathos. "O, Andy, it is so dreadful to think of your being like father."

"I *never* will be like him," exclaimed Andrew, with angry energy.

"But you will if you drink such dreadful stuff as he does. O, Andy, do promise me that you wont; I shall never ask you anything again, for I'm going to heaven, and it will make me so happy if I know that you are going to try and be good."

The boy now, for the first time during this interview, raised his eyes to his sister's anxious face. It was flushed and tearful, and stamped with the finger of death. His hard face softened as he gazed, and two great unbidden tears rolled down his cheeks.

"O, you're going to promise! I know you are, for I see it in your eyes!" cried Roxy, joyfully. "How glad I am!"

"I don't like to promise, unless I'm sure I will keep my word," said Andrew. "I'm afraid I shall forget when I'm with Sam James and the other fellows, and they'll get me drinking before I know it."

"But you'll think of *me*, Andy, and then you wont forget," said Roxy.

"And there is a great and powerful Friend, who is ready to help you keep your promise," interrupted Mrs. Laurie. "Don't be afraid to promise, Andrew, but trust in him."

"Yes," said Roxy, "it is Jesus; the one you are going to learn about in Sunday School; and I am going to live with him in heaven, for I asked him to make a place for me there, and I know he will take care of you."

Suddenly Roxy paused, and a deathly pallor overspread her face. She looked wistfully at Mrs. Laurie, who held a cordial to her lips, and smiled down upon her, as she said tenderly,

"You will soon be with him, my dear child, in that blessed place. He is with you even now, although you cannot see him, and he will never forsake you now. Your pain will soon be over, for

'Jesus can make a dying bed
Seem soft as downy pillows are.'"

Roxy smiled—a sweet, patient smile—but the pain that racked her slender frame was as much as she could bear. She turned once more to Andrew, and gathering all her remaining strength, she clasped his hand in both her own, and gasped, “Andy, Andy, *wont* you promise!”

“I will,” said the poor boy, falling on his knees beside her, and hiding his face in the cushions. “I do promise you, Roxy, that I will never drink anything that would make me a drunkard like—like father, as long as I live!”

Roxy’s face grew brighter at these solemnly spoken words, and she closed her eyes with a sigh of relief. Her little strength was almost exhausted; but she lay quietly for two or three hours, while Mrs. Laurie bathed her head, or chafed her cold limbs, and Andrew sat near, scarcely moving his eyes from her face for a moment.

It was nearly sunset of the short December day when Roxy spoke again.

“I see Jesus!” she said, faintly. “I ain’t afraid. Andy, I’m going now; you come, too, there’ll be a place for you in heaven!” Then there was a short gasp for breath, a faint sigh, and the little sufferer was at rest.

Mrs. Laurie closed the lids over the soft blue eyes, and smoothed the light hair away from the blue veined temples, and as Andrew came forward and stooped to kiss his sister’s face, she laid her hand upon his head, and said gently,

“May Roxy’s death be sanctified to you, and lead you to put your trust in the Saviour whom she loved, so that you may meet her in heaven?”

CHAPTER XIII.

IN accordance with his promise to Roxy, Andrew Hall continued to attend the mission Sunday School, but he was a most refractory and troublesome scholar. There was no species of mischief in which he did not delight, and his restlessness was so contagious, that Mrs. Laurie was obliged to admit that her class was the most disorderly in the school.

An idea of Andrew as a Sunday School scholar for the first eighteen months of his attendance, can be better conveyed to the reader, by a somewhat particular account of his conduct during one session of the school.

It was a bright May morning, and even in the city, glimpses of spring had appeared to warm and cheer the hearts of those who had suffered from the long and inclement winter.

Those who have had much experience in Sunday School teaching, cannot have failed to observe the peculiar restlessness of children at this season of the year. From the first of May, until the warm summer weather is established, the teacher needs to exercise all the patience he possesses, in order to endure the demands made upon it; and even then, he keenly feels how poorly he has succeeded in fixing the wandering thoughts, or impressing the truth upon the minds of his charge.

Andrew seemed peculiarly affected by the genial weather, and even less inclined than usual to submit to the discipline of the school. On this particular morning he was late, and finding the outer door closed and locked, according to the rule of Mr. Wallace, until after the opening exercises, he sat down upon the threshold, and at short intervals thumped his head against the door, until the key was turned, and he was permitted to enter.

Slowly, but with great clatter, he mounted the stairs, at the head of which, either by ac-

cident or design, his Testament and hymn-book fell from his hand, and made a backward trip to the outer door. Of course, Andrew went back for them, jumping down two steps at a time, thereby drawing the attention of every scholar, and most of the teachers. He ascended the stairs this time very rapidly, and noisily crossed the hall, cramming his cap up into his coat sleeve, and forcibly ejecting a small boy from the seat usually occupied by himself, accompanying the exploit with a sly wink and grimace, at Mr. Wallace, whose back was for a moment turned. As soon as he was fairly seated, Mrs. Laurie went on with the business that his coming had interrupted.

"Would you like this book, Johnny?" she asked the little fellow who had been shoved from his corner of the bench, and who now stood beside her, casting malignant glances at Andrew. "It is a very nice book, about a boy who went to live in the country. I think it would please you."

Before Johnny had time to reply, the volume was snatched from Mrs. Laurie's hands, and Andrew was busy searching for the frontispiece, and other illustrations.

"Andrew, you are very rude," said Mrs. Laurie. "Hand me the book immediately.

"I want it," returned Andrew. "He can take another one just as well, and I want to see what this is, about fishing."

Mrs. Laurie, however, very properly insisted that the book should be handed back to her.

"Now," she remarked, passing another to Andrew, "you may take that; it is also very interesting."

"I wont have any," muttered Andrew. "I wont come next Sunday."

"Teacher," whispered Johnny, "he says he wont come next Sunday."

"He must do as he pleases about that," said Mrs. Laurie, looking seriously at the perverse boy, who sat with his head bent forward, the personification of sulkiness. "I cannot oblige

him to come. Now," she added, after a moment's pause, "we will turn to our lesson for to-day. What chapter is it, class?"

"Fifth of Matthew, ninth verse."

"Very well, please find the place." Every one but Andrew, turned to the passage; he put his book down upon the bench, and looked out of the window.

"Andrew, find your place," said Mrs. Laurie.

"I ha'n't got no lesson."

"Find your place, at once."

The Testament was taken up, turned over, and laid down again; and again Mrs. Laurie repeated her command. Andrew silently refused to obey, but sat sulkily, the centre of observation for the class. Mrs. Laurie felt that were she to yield, her authority over the wayward boy was gone forever! She had often been thus tried in the months that had passed, since he became a member of the school, and, although finally the conqueror, the recurrence of such scenes led her to fear

that he was confidently expecting a different result. She laid aside her Bible, and fixing her eyes upon him, said gently, but firmly,

"Andrew, I will give you five minutes by my watch, to open your Testament and find the place. You must do it in that time, or leave my class. I shall be sorry to lose you, for I am interested for you, and I promised your little sister to teach you about the Saviour whom she loved, but I cannot have a scholar who refuses to obey me."

She took her watch, as she spoke, and held it in her hand. One, two, three, four minutes passed, and the fifth was almost gone, when Andrew reluctantly took up the little volume, and carelessly turned its sacred pages. Mrs. Laurie made no comment, but put away her watch, and resumed her Bible. She always succeeded in interesting her class in the lesson, and this morning she explained very clearly the meaning of the word "peace-makers," and showed them, by many pointed illustrations, "how good and how pleasant a

thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." All but Andrew were absorbed in the animated teaching, and even he could not entirely resist the charm of her manner. He was ashamed, however, to let it be seen that he was attending, and so kept his eyes fixed upon the window, and his feet shuffling against the round of his seat, in a most annoying fashion. His ill behavior at the commencement of the lesson, had occupied so much of the half hour devoted to recitations, that the bell rang for order before Mrs. Laurie had finished what she had to say. During the closing exercises, Andrew occupied himself in a variety of ways. First, he pinched the boy who sat nearest him so suddenly that the little fellow jumped from his seat, and uttered a half shriek that set the whole class in an uproar, while Mr. Wallace was obliged to wait, with the singing-book in his hand, until order was restored ; then he pulled from his jacket-pocket a play-bill, with the name of a popular actress printed upon it in enormous letters,

which he exhibited slyly to the boys who occupied the seat behind him; next he pulled an old end of cigar from the same receptacle, and put it in his mouth, shading it from the observation of Mr. Wallace and Mrs. Laurie, with his hand, but leaving it in full view of the classes near by, much to their amusement. While the school were repeating the Lord's Prayer, he was snapping little wet balls of paper at one and another of the orderly boys, and even went so far to aim one at Mr. Wallace himself. In short, whatever mischief he could devise, Andrew did not hesitate to execute. When school was dismissed, without waiting for the classes to go out in order, he started for the stairs, and went down at four bounds, landing at the foot with a shrill and prolonged whistle, very much like the whistle of a steam engine. When the hall was vacated, and no one remaining but the superintendent and two or three of the teachers, he turned to Mrs. Laurie, and said, "That boy is utterly incorrigible! I confess I have no hope of his improvement."


"Neither have I," added Miss Donaldson, whose class was close by Mrs. Laurie's; "he is a greater trial to me than all my seven boys. They would be very attentive but for him; he is continually inciting them to disorder and rebellion by his outrageous behavior. I wish you would expel him, Mr. Wallace. His influence in the school is so very bad."

"I don't know but you are right," said Mr. Wallace; "and yet it was for just such unruly spirits as he, that we undertook this work. If I could perceive the shadow of improvement in the boy, I would be willing to bear with him, but certainly he grows worse and worse, every Sunday. What do you think of sending him from the school, Mrs. Laurie?"

"That I will not consent to it, at least at present," replied the lady firmly. "I am sorry that he troubles other classes, but I cannot give him up, so long as I remember the dying request of his poor little sister, Roxy. No, Mr. Wallace, let him stay, I beg of you."

Many times after this, when Andrew's conduct was almost unbearably rude, his expulsion from the school was suggested, but Mrs. Laurie, remembering her promise, clung to the apparently unthankful boy, and prayed, O! how fervently, that he might give his heart to Jesus. Two or three times she coaxed him to come to her own home, and there she talked and prayed with him, and urged him for Roxy's sake, if he had no higher motive, to try and be a better boy. On such occasions, Andrew was quiet, and somewhat moved by her affectionate and earnest appeals. But whatever impression was made soon wore off, and by the next Sabbath was, apparently, quite forgotten. Still Mrs. Laurie prayed and hoped on, believing that He is faithful who has promised to answer prayer, and that in his own good time, He would bring Andrew into the fold.

CHAPTER XIV.

HE year 1858, will not soon be forgotten by those who witnessed the wonderful work of God's saving grace in our own and other countries, or by the thousands, who then, for the first time, were led to seek Jesus. Earnest Christians, who had prayed and waited long for an outpouring of the Spirit, now felt, that the answer had come ; and rejoicing with exceeding great joy, they inquired with fresh zeal, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?"

In different quarters of large towns and cities, meetings for prayer were instituted, and thronged with anxious and penitent souls ; unusual solemnity accompanied the preaching of the word, and the teaching in Sabbath Schools was of a more pointed and direct character than ever before.

Mr. Wallace and the band of faithful Christians whom he had gathered around him, prayed with increasing fervor, that the school so dear to them, might be visited by the Spirit, and the dear children and youth be led to see and repent of their sins, and come to the Saviour for pardon and peace. These prayers were heard and answered in great mercy, and so many were found inquiring the way of life, that, for a few weeks, the usual exercises of the school were suspended, and the hour was passed in devotional exercises. It was a touching and beautiful sight, to see numbers of the poor, ragged, and forlorn boys and girls who composed the school, rising in their seats, and with tearful faces and broken voices, asking the prayers of their superintendent and teachers, and, as their interest deepened, themselves joining in those supplications, and beseeching God's mercy. In addition to these Sunday morning exercises, Mr. Wallace held a childrens' prayer and inquiry meeting every Sunday and Wednesday evening, in the same

place. At the first meeting only five were present, but from that time the room was filled, and not only with the children. Anxious for themselves, with the generous impulse of youth, they brought with them their older brothers and sisters, and, in some instances, their parents, poor, disheartened, broken-down outcasts, whose faces told the sad story of sorrow, sin, and shame, that they, too, might hear the good news of salvation by Christ. Several of these meetings had been held, and, while almost every member of Mrs. Laurie's class had attended them, and some were rejoicing in the sense of sins forgiven, Andrew Hall, apparently harder and more stubborn than ever, utterly refused to be present. In vain his faithful teacher urged upon him his duty, and entreated him to listen to the voice, that so kindly invited him to come to Jesus for pardon and rest; every word she uttered only seemed to increase the hardness and opposition of his heart. Out of the Sunday School, which he never failed to

attend, he plunged deeper and deeper in sin, choosing for his companions those who, like himself, ridiculed and scoffed at the prayers and exhortations of Christians.

The friends, who had known and cared for little Roxy, and for her sake felt interested in this erring boy, watched with great pain his downward course, and earnestly prayed, that he might yet be reclaimed.

"Are you not discouraged?" Mrs. Kent inquired of her sister, Mrs. Laurie. "It certainly seems an almost hopeless case. I confess, that my faith in regard to him is very weak."

"Mine is not," replied Mrs. Laurie. "I am not discouraged, neither will I be, so long as I remember, that God has promised to hear and answer the prayers of his children. Besides, there are two very hopeful facts, for which I feel very thankful.

"What are they?" asked Mrs. Kent.

"You recollect the promises, which he made to Roxy, when she was dying? He has kept

them sacred ; and surely there is no reason to despair of his salvation, while he regularly and constantly attends the Sunday School, and never tastes intoxicating drinks."

"But how can you know that he does not, Jenny?"

"I have it from boys who know him well. He has often been tempted, but neither ridicule, persuasion, nor threats, have as yet moved him. O, if he were a Christian, what a noble, steadfast Christian he would make ! He has energy, courage, and strength of will ; but there seems a great want of feeling. I have frequently noticed him, when almost every member of the school was in tears, sitting with his head bowed, his long hair falling over his face, as unmoved as a rock, and apparently dead to the solemn words that were spoken by Mr. Wallace and others. I confess, I do not understand the boy, but I am not discouraged, *and I will never give up!*"

It was true that Mrs. Laurie did not quite understand Andrew's character and feelings.

She was mistaken in supposing that he was unmoved. He was thoroughly miserable. Conscience, that terrible but faithful monitor, long silenced, but not entirely banished, now spoke to his heart in thunder tones. It accused him of sins committed against a holy and just God ; it urged him to "flee from the wrath to come," and he was fighting against it with all the power of his sinful nature. The Spirit whispered, "Come to Jesus." Mr. Wallace, with friendly regard, repeated the blessed invitation ; Mrs. Laurie continued to urge upon him the danger of delay, but still he remained impenitent and cold.

One Sunday evening, driven almost to despair by the conflicting emotions, that raged in his breast, Andrew found himself alone, at the door of the mission school room, a few minutes after the prayer-meeting had begun. He heard the voice of Mr. Wallace addressing those present in plain, direct language, on the importance of forsaking sin, and turning to Christ ; but the words failed to reach him, and

with a half-suppressed groan he turned to go away, when the notes of a sweet hymn fell upon his ear. The melody was so beautiful, that he paused involuntarily to listen, and drew nearer the stairs.

“Jesus stands, O! how amazing,
Stands and knocks at every door;
In his hands ten thousand blessings,
Proffer’d to the wretched poor.
Sinner, can you hate the Saviour?
Can you thrust him from your arms?
Once he died for your behavior,
Now he calls you to his arms.”

These were the words, to which Andrew listened, and which touched his heart. Softly he crept up stairs, and took a seat very near the entrance, hiding his face in his old cap, so that none might recognize him. The room was filled, and many even of the youngest children were in tears. The hymn was sung to the end, and then, as an invitation was given for any, who felt disposed, to take part in the meeting, to do so freely, a young lad rose in his seat, and in a few broken words said, that he believed Jesus had taken his sins

away, and would help him to serve God, but he wanted Christians to pray for him, that he might not be discouraged. This was followed by a brief, but very earnest prayer, by one of the teachers, and then Mr. Wallace requested all those who felt anxious, on account of sin, and who wished to serve the Lord, to rise. • In a moment twenty persons, some of them children, and some grey-haired men and women, were on their feet, their tearful faces expressing the anxiety they felt. How Andrew longed to be among them ! but fear of ridicule from his old companions kept him back, and he sat motionless, while special prayer was offered for them, that they might be led to give themselves up to the Saviour. At its close, a sweet female voice struck up the verse :

“ Come all ye souls by sin oppress’d,
Ye restless wand’rers after rest,
Ye poor, and maim’d, and halt and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find.”

What an invitation was this to poor An-

drew, whose heart was so very, very heavy with its burden of sin! Had not he held out in his stubborn rebellion against God long enough! Oh, yes, he thought with a groan, so long, that the invitation was not, could not be for him. It was too late! Just as the last notes of the hymn died away, a little boy knelt, and in his feeble accents prayed, "Oh, Jesus, please to help me to find you. I don't want to swear, or tell lies any more; I want to be good, so that you will love me, dear Jesus. I want to ask you to please to make all the scholars that go to our mission-school good; and oh, please to make Andrew Hall want to come to the prayer-meeting, and help me to forgive him for firing stones at my kitten; and help my father that drinks, to be good, and to come here so that he may love God. Amen."

In the moment of silence that ensued, Andrew's heart beat so loud and fast, that he was sure every one in the room heard it, and he trembled from head to foot. It was a critical

moment with the poor boy, whose sense of guilt was growing deeper every instant, but whose fear of ridicule was so strong, that it seemed utterly impossible for him to express the concern he felt. God, however, was watching over him, and patiently awaiting his decision. Oh, how great is that mercy which *waits* for the repentance of the sinner, instead of withdrawing the offer of pardon so long slighted !

The meeting was about to be closed ; Mr. Wallace had given out for the last hymn the words :


“ Come, trembling sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve,
Come with your doubts and fears oppressed
And make this last resolve—
‘ I’ll go to Jesus, tho’ my sins
Like mountains round me close;
I know his gates—I’ll enter in
Whatever may oppose.’ ”

In the moment of silence which followed the reading of the hymn, Andrew suddenly arose, and with his rough face still half hid in his cap, cried out in an agony of tears :

"Oh! pray for me — pray for me, before you sing!"

The choking utterance, the earnest request from a boy, well known to the most of those present as one of the most profane and wicked lads in the neighborhood, excited much feeling, and the meeting was prolonged while several prayers were offered in his behalf. It was a very solemn and impressive occasion, and as Mrs. Laurie walked home, tears of joy filled her eyes, and from her heart went up an offering of thanksgiving and praise to Him, who had brought this young prodigal to feel his need of pardon, and to seek his Father's house.

CHAPTER XV.

 HE conflict in Andrew's heart was soon over. In a remarkable manner it was true to him, that "old things were passed away, and all things became new." He had gone to Christ in humble faith, cast his burden of guilt at the foot of the cross, and there found peace, and not only peace, but joy. The growth of his Christian character was so marked and rapid as to excite surprise in the minds of those who had long watched him with interest. It seemed as if God had chosen this boy, so rude, so rough, so ignorant, as a wonderful monument of grace, and instrument of good, and was leading him in a special manner through green pastures, and beside still waters.

Mrs. Laurie was not mistaken when she said, Andrew would make a noble, steadfast Christian, if converted; and the trials which he was forced to encounter only contributed to that result. His position was, as we know, of a most trying character. There was nothing attractive, but everything repulsive about his miserable home. His father, sunk so low in vice and debauchery of all kinds, seemed utterly past hope, and his mother, who, while Roxy lived, had, for her sake, refrained from joining in his drunken orgies, now that restraint was removed, sought forgetfulness of her sorrows and discouragement in the poison cup. Together, they made their home a dwelling fit only for fiends, and Andrew, animated by new purposes and desires, turned from it with loathing. His old companions of the street, met him with all manner of ridicule and profane expressions of contempt, but they soon found that the lad who had hitherto been keenly sensitive to their scorn, was so changed that he not only bore it in silence, but

maintained a bright, sunny countenance, without a flush of resentment or anger, even under their rudest and coarsest insults. That he might do something to lead them, and his parents to seek the happiness which he had found, was the cherished desire of Andrew's heart; and his daily prayer went up to God for wisdom and strength, to enable him to choose the right method, and adopt it, however trying it might be. Such prayers God delights to answer, for he has promised, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; *and it shall be given him.*"

In Mr. Wallace and Mrs. Laurie, Andrew found safe advisers and firm friends. Many were the conversations he had with them, and many were the prayers they offered with, and for him, at the outset of his Christian life, and to their influence under God, he owed much, both spiritually and temporally.

Soon after his conversion, Mr. Wallace gave Andrew a place in his store, as errand-boy,

and, as the home of his parents was unsuitable for him, found cheap but comfortable lodgings and board for him in the family of a poor widow.

Here, for the first time in his life, the boy learned the value and blessing of a Christian home. Mrs. Bayley was deeply and sincerely pious; her religion was not of the kind which is brought out on Sunday, and laid away for the remainder of the week, but it was the pervading principle of her life; it entered into and sanctified the homely labors of each day, and it enabled her to meet the sorrows and privations of life with cheerful content. Her husband and two children had been snatched from her side, almost at a single stroke, but she remembered, that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and though her heart was bleeding, she raised her eyes to heaven, and murmured, "Thy will, O God, not mine, be done." Left thus to struggle alone with poverty, and with two little girls to support, Mrs. Bayley's faith failed not. She was a member

of the same church with Mrs. Kent, and the ladies of the parish furnished her with plain sewing, so that by patient industry she had been enabled to keep her children, Alice and Mary, with her, in the pleasant little cottage, where all the years of her married life had been passed. It was to this home that Andrew Hall was admitted ; and under the daily influence of Mrs. Bayley, his rude manners softened, and his air of awkward shyness gave place to one of quiet dignity and self-possession.

Not far from Mrs. Bayley's cottage, there lived a decrepid old colored woman, known all over the neighborhood, as " Aunt Becky." She was supported almost wholly by private charities, having but a very small sum of money saved from the earnings of former years ; but, although very poor in the riches of this world, aunt Becky looked forward to a bright crown and a rich inheritance in heaven. On this inheritance her heart was fixed, and she longed for the time to come, when she

would be released from her feeble body, and permitted to take possession of it.

Andrew had often heard Mrs. Bayley and the children speak of aunt Becky, but several weeks passed before he saw her, and then the meeting seemed almost by chance, so slight were the circumstances which led to it, and yet it was the means of much good to the young disciple.

It was a stormy October morning, too stormy for the little girls to venture out, and Mrs. Bayley had a plate of griddle-cakes to send from her own breakfast table, to aunt Becky. Andrew was just ready for his walk to the store, and offered to take them along with him.

"It is out of your way," said Mrs. Bayley, "and I am sorry to trouble you; but I cannot help fearing that the poor thing is without a breakfast this morning, so I will accept your offer, and be much obliged. Open the outer door, and go right in, Andrew, for it is very hard for her to walk about the house."

Thus directed, Andrew went on his way.

Aunt Becky's little cottage had but two tiny rooms ; it was a queer bit of a place, with a low porch over the front door, but it looked clean and tidy, and there was a green cambric curtain at the window. Andrew went in softly, and paused a moment in the entry to shake the rain from his coat ; in this pause, the sound of an aged voice fell upon his ear. Aunt Becky was praying. He heard only these few simple words :

" If 'tis best, Father, send me my breakfast, and keep this poor old body 'live ; but if you be ready for Becky to go up there where Jesus is, I'se ready and glad for ; " and here the voice of prayer was changed for that of song :

" I long to behold him arrayed
With glory and light from above ;
The King in his beauty displayed,
His beauty of holiest love."

Andrew would gladly have waited to hear the hymn sang through, broken as was aunt Becky's voice ; but he remembered his duty to

Mr. Wallace, and rapping gently, pushed open the kitchen door, and walked in.

Aunt Becky sat in her straw-seated chair, beside a small round table. It was covered with a white napkin ; a plate, knife and fork, were laid upon it, and beside them stood a cup of water ; all the preparations were made for breakfast, that aunt Becky was able to make, and now she sat waiting for it. She glanced around and smiled as Andrew drew near the table, and handed her the plate of smoking griddle-cakes.

" I never see you 'fore," she said, " but I'm glad to see any body that the Lord sends."

" Mrs. Bayley asked me to come and bring these cakes to you," said Andrew.

" Laws, yes !" returned aunt Becky, " but doesn't you know, child, that the Lord's back of her, and he says to her this morning, ' You send aunt Becky her breakfast to-day,' and so she sent it."

" Yes, that's it," said Andrew ; " she said she felt as if you hadn't any ; but it seems strange to me."

“ Nothing strange 'bout it, child,” and aunt Becky fixed her still bright eyes upon his face. “ Don't you see how 'tis. I'm one of the Lord's chil'en, and he has kept me here, in this world, till I'm too old and feeble to work ; that's all right, else he never'd a done it ; but you see's long as I stay here, I've got to have bread to eat, an' if I can't buy it, or make it, why he's goin' to send it to me himself, till he's ready for me up there. So where's the odds, if he sends it right down out of heaven 's he did to the chil'en of Israel, or by a raven 's he did to good ole 'Lijah, or he puts it into the heart of some good woman to bring or send it. I'm just as sure that I'll be fed as I'm that I should starve if I hadn't nothin' t' eat, and so I always set my table like this, and wait till the food comes.”

“ I wonder if I will ever have faith like that,” said Andrew, involuntarily.

“ Have you got any faith at all ? ” asked aunt Becky.

“ I think so ; I hope so.”

"Well, it wont grow into a big tree in a day ; it is like a little mustard seed at first, and it gets stronger and bigger every hour, till by-'n'-by it spreads out its branches, and its roots strikes down deeper 'n' deeper into the earth, and no matter how big a tempest comes, it can't move it a hair."

"I must go this minute, aunt Becky," interrupted Andrew, as the clock struck eight. "I ought to have been at the store now, but I'm coming to see you again, very soon ; may I?"

"Yes, indeed," said aunt Becky, heartily, "come just when you can."

In accordance with his promise, and the old woman's permission, Andrew called that very evening, and found aunt Becky and another aged colored woman holding a prayer-meeting. He sat down by the fire, and listened with streaming eyes, to the warm and child-like prayers and conversation of these two saints, who were standing, as it were, on the very "verge of Jordan," and longing to pass over. When their hour of devotion was about

to close, he, too, knelt, uninvited, and joined his petitions with theirs.

“How good that seems,” cried aunt Becky, wiping her eyes; “it’s more like a real prayer-meetin’ to hear three a prayin’ together. Rosy ’n’ I,” she continued, “have had our little meetin’ every Tuesday night, for ’s many ’s twenty-five years. I al’ays enjoy ’em, but since I’ve been too feeble to go out, they’ve been mor’n my meat ’n’ drink to me. I used to love my meetin’ ’bove every thing, and it’s the greatest cross I have, to be obliged to stay away; but I don’t mean to complain. Praise the Lord! I’ll soon be up there, where ’tis blessed meetin’ all the time, an’ the Lord himself is the preacher.”

“May I come every Tuesday evening?” Andrew asked, as he rose to go.


“O, yes, indeed, if you will,” said aunt Becky and Rosy in a breath, an’ “perhaps you’ll read a chapter in the Good Book,” added Rosy, “for we are ignorant old women, and slow at the reading, and it would be nice to

have a whole chapter instead of one little verse, though to be sure one verse is enough to feed us well, aunt Becky, a'n't it?"

"Yes," said aunt Becky, smiling, "but we'll have a feast, when we can get it, and thank the Lord for it."

This was the beginning of Andrew's public labors for God. Aunt Becky and Rosy invited some of the neighbors to come in, and hear a chapter read, on the following Tuesday, and when the hour came, the kitchen was crowded. From week to week, the interest increased; both of aunt Becky's rooms and the entry were filled, and more than one soul was led to seek Jesus. It was an arduous duty for one so young as Andrew, to perform, and he deeply felt his responsibility, but God helped him, and he soon found, by his own experience, that "he that watereth, shall be watered also himself."

CHAPTER XVI.

NDREW'S father, "Topsy Bill," was dying the dreadful death of the drunkard. His wife stood beside the pallet of straw, on which he lay, terrified and trembling; Andrew, summoned from his work, stood near her, while three strong men held the struggling figure, and all anxiously waited until God should see fit to free the poor soul, and release them from the sight and sound of such horror. Oh, it was fearful to hear the oaths and imprecations, that fell from those swollen and purple lips, and the raving that followed the brief moments of quiet, when, exhausted by his struggles, he would fall back upon his pillow. All manner of terrible visions haunted the drunkard's brain; he fancied that serpents were writhing

and coiling around his arms and throat ; that demons were perched upon his limbs, and grinning in his face ; that hell was opening to receive him, and that unquenchable fire was burning and flaming about him. It was appalling to listen to his shrieks of agony, as he struggled to free himself from the grasp of those who held him ; even the men, hard and rough as they were, with faces that showed too plainly, that they were approaching a like fate, even they trembled and turned pale, and wished themselves away from a scene, which they could never forget.

"Mother, don't stay here," said Andrew, as a paroxysm of great violence shook the frame of the dying man, and he threw himself from the bed. "Don't stay here, you can't help father. Wont you go down stairs?"

"No," said Mrs. Hall, shaking her head, and never for a moment withdrawing her eyes from her husband's face. "I shall stay here. Andrew, I'm glad Roxy didn't live to see this, and to know that I'm as bad as he !"

“Oh! mother,” and Andrew took her thin hand in his, and held it to his wet eyes, “Oh, mother, it isn’t too late for *you* to give up drinking; you mustn’t come to this.”

“Too late! too late! too late!” shrieked the dying man, flinging up his arms in wild despair. “Yes,—too late! too late! too late! Hell’s all ready, Judy! we’ll burn there together, old woman! Take off the snakes, Jim! don’t you see ’em all over my neck and hands. Help! help! help! Oh! too late! too late! too late!” and with this cry repeated over and over again, poor Bill drew his last breath; and his spirit went “to his own place.”

Through the kindness of Mr. Wallace, Andrew was enabled to give his father a decent burial, but for a time, his cheerfulness was gone. Of course he could feel no grief for the death of such a parent, but the recollection of that last scene of despair and terror, haunted him by day and by night. Turn whichever way he would, the haggard face and glar-

ing eyes followed him, and the sound of those shrieks was in his ear. Added to this, was anxiety for his mother. He felt, that it was now his duty to find a home for her and contribute to her support, but it was a great trial to him to think of giving up his pleasant lodgings at Mrs. Bayley's, and her Christian counsel, for such a home as his mother would make, and for her companionship. A week passed away, and some decision must be made. Andrew had not neglected to carry the case to his Father in heaven, but had sought for direction from him many times daily, and waited, hoping the way would be made plain to him.

He had taken his candle and was going to his room, one evening, when Mrs. Bayley stopped him, and said in her kind way,

"Andrew, you look troubled to-night. What is the matter?"

"I *am* troubled," he replied, setting down the lamp, and looking thoughtfully in the fire. "I don't know what I ought to do about mother."

"I have been making a plan," said Mrs. Bayley. "I don't know what you will think of it, but I will tell you what it is; and you can do as you like about adopting it. You know," she continued, seriously, "that it is very hard to break away from a bad habit, especially that which your mother has incurred; but you tell me she is anxious to free herself from it."

"Yes," said Andrew, "she says she will try never to drink again, but there are so many to tempt her, and so few to encourage, that I am afraid she will not keep her resolution. Oh, I wish she might!"

"I have a small attic chamber; Andrew," said Mrs. Bayley, "it is not very nicely furnished off, but there are two pleasant windows in it. My plan is, for your mother to come and take possession of it."

"Oh, how good you are," cried Andrew, with tears in his eyes, "how kind to think of such a thing. But," he added sorrowfully, "if she should not keep her word, I—"

"Don't bring up objections," interrupted Mrs. Bayley, smiling. "Please God, she *will* keep her word. Don't you see, Andrew, that she will have no temptation from without, while she is here? You and I must do all we can, to help and encourage her. I will be her friend; you must be her dutiful and affectionate son. We must let her see that we love her, my dear boy, and I have faith to believe, that she will yet become a worthy and good woman."

"I pray God, she may," said Andrew fervently.

"There is furniture enough in the attic," said Mrs. Bayley, "and I can supply her with sewing; she will help me about my housework, and after awhile take care of her boy's clothing. She will be much happier to be constantly employed. Oh, I think we will get along nicely together, Andrew, and how happy we shall be, if she is reclaimed, to think that, under God, we were the means of it."

"I am the happiest boy in the world, I

really believe," said Andrew, when after an hour's conversation, he again took his lamp to retire. "My troubles have vanished for the present, at least,—and I feel light enough to fly! I hope I will be able sometime, to prove how grateful I am to you."

The following evening found Mrs. Hall safely housed under Mrs. Bayley's roof, and in full possession of the little chamber, which was a palace, in comparison with the garret that had been her home for the few years past. Andrew watched her with beaming eyes, as she examined the simple furniture, with almost childish delight.

"How nice it is," she said, turning to him with something like a smile on her wan face, "how nice it is! Why here's a bed and pillow, and a table and two chairs, and a wash-stand, and looking-glass. It seems like old times, Andrew, when you was a baby. I had such things then, before Bill took to drinking, and I thought it was the pleasantest world, and nothing to trouble one. But, oh," she

added, with a sigh, "how soon it all changed, and the troubles came one after another, so fast that they kept my heart breaking all the time."

"Poor mother!" said Andrew, laying his hand on her shoulder, "and I might have been a comfort to you all those years, but I was not! I am very sorry when I think how wicked I was, and how unkind to you and Roxy, who had to suffer so much. I think God has forgiven me,—will you forgive me, too, mother, and I will try to be a good son to you as long as I live?"

Words of tenderness and love were so new to poor Mrs. Hall, that they seemed almost like an unknown language; but the look of affection that accompanied them made them intelligible, and she threw her arms around the neck of her boy and gave him the first mother's kiss that he had ever known.

"What makes you seem so different, Andy?" she asked him, as they stood by the window, a little later, looking out upon the

clear wintry sky. "You used to be rough and cross, but now you are gentle and pleasant; you aren't like the same boy—though Roxy said you was always good to her."

"Dear little Roxy!" said Andrew softly. "If she had lived, how hard I'd have worked for her—but she's happy now. I'll tell you, mother, what makes me different from what I was," he went on dashing the tears from his face, "I'm trying to follow Jesus Christ. I used to love to do wrong. I thought it was manly to drink, and swear, and gamble, and cheat, and steal, but now, I want to be holy and pure. I hate the things I loved then, and I pray to God every day to keep me from doing them. It is because I love the Saviour who died for me, that I am different from what I was—and it makes me so happy, mother, that I want you and every one else to love him too."

"When I was a little girl," said Mrs. Hall, "I remember my grandmother used to tell me about Jesus Christ, but it is years ago. I have forgotten it all now."


"He hasn't forgotten you, mother, and he loves you and wants you to love him. Wont you kneel down here with me, mother, and let me pray with you, and ask him to help you to come to him?"

Thus urged, Mrs. Hall knelt, and wondering, listened to the fervent petitions offered for her, and the wish, feeble and faint, it is true, sprang up in her sad, worn heart, that she might begin to lead a better life. The moon and the stars that Roxy used to love to watch, shown down upon the bowed figures of mother and son, and far above moon and stars, Jesus heard the earnest prayer, and happy angels sang together for joy that one more sinner had begun to look heavenward.



Andy as a Student.—P. 183.

CHAPTER XVII.

NDREW'S daily duties left him several leisure hours, and these he spent in faithful, earnest study. It had been the cherished desire of his heart since his conversion, to preach the gospel of Christ, and carry to the poor and wretched the tidings of salvation by faith. None knew better than he, the sin that existed in the low quarters of the city, for he had been rescued from it, and he felt that it was his mission to lead others up out of the terrible pit, and point them to the rock on which they might firmly and securely stand. This was the motive that inspired him to study and read, hour after hour, when many would have given way to weakness; this it was that led him to save every penny that was not absolutely

needed to supply his mother's wants and his own, and he confidently hoped in two years to be ready to commence his education. Patiently he labored, earnestly he studied, fervently he prayed, always bearing in mind the injunction of the apostle, which he had adopted for his motto, "Be not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."

But God's ways are not ours. True it is that he hears and answers the prayers of his children, but not always at the time or in the manner we expect.

"In ways they have not known
He leads his own."

Andrew was just entering his nineteenth year; he had been faithful and diligent, and in one short month he expected to enter the Academy at W——, when the first gun fired at Fort Sumter, kindled the fire of patriotism to a blaze in the hearts of all loyal men. We remember, as though it were but yesterday, the excitement that ensued; how the noble volun-

teers came pouring in from the North and the West, eager to fight and willing to fall for the glorious Union. We remember how bravely they went forth, how hopefully they bade the dear ones who could only wait and pray, good-bye. Oh! yes, we remember it well, for many, many of them will never come back any more, and their homes are desolate.

Andrew Hall's impulsive spirit was among the first to take fire.

"It is my duty, mother," was his firm answer to her remonstrances. "First my God, next my country, *then* my mother. I cannot stay quietly at home, and know that others are laying down their lives for my liberties. *I must be there*, and if I fall, God will take care of you. You have learned to trust in him."

Yes; that was true. Won by the Christian example of her son and Mrs. Bayley, quite as much as by their faithful warnings and exhortations, Mrs. Hall had been led to the Saviour, and there had her weary, discour-

aged spirit, found the comfort and repose for which it longed. But as her faith and hope increased, her affection for her boy increased also, and she found it very hard to give him up, even when convinced that it was his duty to go.

It was a matter of great rejoicing to Andrew that he was to enlist under Mr. Kent, who had received his commission as captain of company B, —th regiment; and on his part, Capt. Kent gladly enrolled his name, for he had watched Andrew's career with deep interest, and he well knew the value of such men in trying and responsible stations.

The evening preceding the departure of the regiment, was spent by our young volunteer in Aunt Becky's prayer-meeting. It was touching to hear the prayers that were offered for the preservation of him who had so long read and explained to them the Word of God. Rosy's broken words, aunt Becky's feeble accents, the sobs of his mother, and

the silent tears of Mrs. Bayley, was enough to move a much harder heart than Andrew's, but not a tear dimmed the brightness of his eye. It was, indeed, sad to part with his friends, but glorious to offer up his life for his country, and thus inspired with enthusiasm, he could not weep.

When the meeting was over, Aunt Becky grasped his hand, and holding it in both her own, said solemnly, "I bless the Lord that you're going, child. The light's beginning to dawn! Light for my people—the day of Jubilee; they've prayed for it, and longed for it, and waited for it, and, praise God, 'tis a'most come. You'll come back, child, I feel it right here," placing one hand upon her heart. "'A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.' I believe I shall live to see you again in this world, but if not we'll meet up there—up there!"

"Yes, Aunt Becky, thank God for that!" added Rosy, drawing near, her dark face wet

with tears, but beaming with joy. "There's many mansions in our Father's house, and Jesus is a preparing of 'em for all his dear friends; 'twont be long at the longest 'fore he calls us to come; so keep your lamp trimmed and burning, child," and she turned towards Andrew, and laying her hand on his head, continued, "you've got one to go with you, that wont never leave you 'less you leave him; you know who *that* is; and I pray God to keep you out of sin, more'n out of danger. The worst any one can do to you is to kill your body, and send you home to glory, so that wouldn't be very bad; but if you should go a straying off away from Jesus, and get into bad ways and bad company, it would be a thousand times worse'n death; so keep your armor bright, child, and the Lord bless you."

Such were the parting words of the two old colored women, to whom Andrew was as dear as though he had been their own child.

On reaching home, Mrs. Bayley found a

neat little parcel on the sitting-room table, directed to "Andrew Hall, private, company B, —th regiment." Andrew laughed as he read the address, but on opening the package, which contained a small but very handsome copy of the Bible, the laugh was changed to a smile of surprise and pleasure, for, on the fly-leaf was written :

"Presented to Andrew Hall, by his affectionate friends, the members of Mrs. Laurie's class, in the Mission School."

Andrew stood thoughtfully turning the pages, and his memory ran back over the past four years of his life. The heavy night's sleep on Mr. Kent's door steps, Miss Hilary singing in the library, Lily's sweet voice and persuasive smile ; the first morning in the Mission School ; little Roxy's dying words, his promise to her ; his father's terrible death, his conversion, his hopes of entering the Christian ministry ; his days of toil, and the hard study of many sleepless nights ; the conversion of his mother, now so dear to his heart ;

his humble, but, as he hoped, not fruitless labors in the vineyard of the Lord,—all these memories came rushing back upon him, with such vividness, that he seemed almost living them over again.

Mrs. Hall aroused him from his reverie, by laying her hand upon his arm, and saying, in a voice that she vainly tried to make steady,

“It is past ten o’clock, Andy, and you’ve got to be up early to-morrow. Hadn’t you better read now, and then go to bed?”

“Yes, mother,” and Andrew looked affectionately down into her pale, worn face, and smoothed the grey locks from her forehead. “I have kept you up too late, but I’m afraid you don’t mean to sleep much to-night.”

Andrew was correct in that supposition, but little did he expect that for the two night’s past, she had not closed her eyes, but had spent the silent hours in tears and prayers for him.

Mrs. Bayley brought the Bible, and laid it open upon the table before him. Comforting

and blessed, was the passage upon which his eyes fell, and he chose it for this last night's reading. Centuries ago, the early Christians rested upon it with calm confidence, as they praised God in the gloomy catacombs of Rome, undismayed by the fearful threats of their persecutors; it had brought comfort to martyrs and saints in all ages of the Church, and as Andrew now read it, it filled his own soul with assurance, and his listeners with peace.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early."

"They were comfortable words, dear mother," said Andrew, when after the season of devotion, they were about to separate for the night. "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge—*our* refuge, yours and mine, so long as we trust in him. Let us not be troubled or cast down."

"I do try not to be, Andy," and the poor woman hid her face upon his shoulder, sobbing, "but it is so dark; it is so hard to give up the only one in the world who really cares for me, and to think that I may never see him again."

She had said the same thing over and over again, but Andrew patiently soothed her grief, and at length had the happiness of seeing her raise her head, and even make an effort to smile, as he kissed her and said, "good-night."


At noon the next day, the —th regiment set out amid the cheers and good wishes of assembled thousands, for Washington.

They were noble looking fellows, the men

composing that regiment, and as mothers, sisters, wives, and children clung about them, it was no shame to their manhood if a few scalding tears fell from their eyes; for this was no ordinary parting, and not one of all the number but felt that it might be for the last time.

As the train moved slowly from the station, Mrs. Hall saw through her tears the form of her son, standing on the platform of the rear car, with a hopeful smile upon his face, his cap in his hand, his eyes raised towards heaven. O! how many times in the weary months of anxiety and suspense that followed, did the remembrance of that smile and the uplifted face, soothe, comfort, and console her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

T must not be supposed that Andrew Hall, ardent as he was, enlisted without first seeking direction from Him whom he had made the guide of his youth. It is true that his spirit was kindled with enthusiasm, but his judgment was also convinced that the path he now chose was marked out for him by Providence. And so he went forth to fight, perchance to fall for the country he loved. Our first volunteers, as we all know, were for the most part totally ignorant of military life. Many of them had never handled a musket, but as in the days of the Revolution, so now, they came from the work-shop, the field, and the institutions of learning, inspired with one solemn purpose. In the words of another, "they were earnest, grave, determined." Badly equipped, hag-

gard, unshorn, they yet had a manhood in their look that hardship could not kill. They were evidently thinking all the time of the conflict into which they were about to enter. Their gray, eager eyes, seemed to be looking for the heights of Virginia. It is not our present purpose to follow Andrew and his regiment on their march to Washington. We have read of the way they went under a "sun that poured down its rays like hot lava;" of the night vigils when, still marching through lonely pine woods and gloomy passes, and over treacherous looking bridges, the thought of their country's flag trampled under traitorous feet, of the youthful forms shot down in the streets of Baltimore, and of the dear ones at home, filled their hearts with more burning patriotism, and their eyes with tears. Neither will we pause to recount the scenes of the first three months of active service, although Andrew's fearless courage and perseverance in the engagements at Little and Great Bethel, won for him the encomiums of his superior

officers, and were the means of his promotion from private to sergeant of the company. At the close of three months, he enlisted for three years, writing home to his mother, "There is so much to be done that I cannot return to you with a free conscience. *I must stay and help fight it out.* It is not for the Union alone, mother, but for our free institutions, that the war must go on until we conquer: and conquer we *shall*, for God is with us. Mother, I charge you, when you pray for me, pray also for the poor slaves. Aunt Becky says the day is dawning for her race, and it is true; but our own northern men refuse to see the signs of it. God grant that the time may speedily come when the oppressed shall be free, when we shall recognize, even in the bond slave, our brother and our friend."

With his regiment, and especially with the members of his company, Andrew was respected and beloved. At first, when they found that he was a "praying man," they were dis-

posed to shun and ridicule him, but as day by day they watched him and found him ever earnest and hopeful, their contempt gave place to respect; afterwards, when in battle, he proved himself calm, composed and brave, they gave him their warm regard. They knew not the secret of his strength, but it lay within the covers of the little Bible that he carried in his breast-pocket, and in the frequent, silent prayers that found their way from his heart, up to God's throne, not for himself alone, but for his companions in arms.

The profanity and intemperance, so alarmingly prevalent, not only among the privates, but also among all ranks of officers, were a source of great pain and anxiety to our young Christian soldier. They recalled with sickening vividness the days of his childhood, the sin and degradation of his home, the sorrows that had cast a heavy shadow over much of his life, and he longed for an opportunity to do something to stay the tide of evil that threatened to demoralize the army and ruin

the cause in which it was engaged. But what could he do? This was the question that troubled and perplexed him, and as day after day and week after week passed on, it seemed to him that he was growing hard and careless by inactivity. True he was faithful to the most minute duty devolving upon him as a soldier in the Federal army, but what was he doing in the army of the Lord? In the midst of foes and danger, was he bearing aloft the banner of the cross? "No, no," he sadly answered, as pacing back and forth on his guard in the night watches, he mused upon his present life, so different from the one to which he had looked forward with high hopes.

And yet Andrew Hall was a daily and living epistle "known and read of all men," showing by his every act, whose he was, and whom he served, and only the judgment day would reveal the power that lay in his silent example.

Feeling thus doubtful whether he were really doing what he might for the souls of

his companions, a little incident occurred just before the battle of Antietam, which gave Andrew abundant cause for gratitude, while at the same time it surprised him.

It was quite late in the evening, and he sat in his shelter tent writing to his mother, the letter that might prove to be his last, when he was interrupted by the entrance of a tall, dark-browed man, much older than himself, and bearing upon his face the marks of a long course of dissipation and sin.

"Will you write a letter for me, Hall?" he asked, and Andrew fancied that the rough voice was slightly tremulous.

"Certainly," said Andrew, cheerfully laying aside his paper and taking a fresh sheet.

"I didn't mean to disturb you; perhaps I ought to wait until you get through your own letter?"

"O! no; I can finish that just as well by-and-by."

"I want to write to my wife," said the man, shading his eyes with his hand, "and I don't

know just what to say; or rather how to say what I want to. I haven't been a very good husband to her, and I'm sorry for it. Before I enlisted I 'most killed her by drinking; but I couldn't help it. I'd make up my mind that I would leave off, but there's always somebody to tempt me to break my word. Close by my shop there was a grog shop, and somehow I couldn't keep away from it, so I'd go home night after night, almost dead drunk, and she never gave me a cross word or look, but was always patient and kind. Well, when I came to the army I found that whiskey wasn't allowed, and I plucked up courage. For now, thinks I, I'm out of the way of temptation. I've felt more like a man since I've been here than I have before for a long time. But to-night—you know how it was, Hall—the whiskey was put right into our very hands by the Colonel's own orders, and it seemed as if I was almost crazy after it. You was standing near by with that little Jenkins, and I saw you when you poured your share out upon

the ground, and when he called you a fool for it, I listened and heard you tell him about your little sister, and the promise you made her when she was a dying. It brought the tears to my eyes, I tell you, Hall, and I thought of my poor wife and her two little girls, and I went off by myself and emptied my canteen on the ground as you did, though the smell of it was so tempting that I could have got down on my knees and lapped it up. And now I want to tell my wife of it, and promise her that I'll keep steady for her sake and the childrens, and ask her to pray for me, for she's a praying woman, Jane is, and tell her I feel strong, to-night—stronger than ever I did before."

Andrew wrote the letter with a thankful heart. At its close he turned to his companion and said,

"To-morrow, Rollins, we go into battle. Shall I say anything about it to her?"

"Yes," and Rollins rose to his feet and drew up his strong, muscular figure to its full

height. "Tell her that if I'm shot, she must remember I was fighting for the old flag, and that my last thought will be of her and the children."

"Now," he continued, as Andrew folded and directed the letter, "I'll tell you, Hall, it seems kind of fixed in my mind that I won't get out of the battle alive. I ain't nervous about it, but I'd like to know what'll become of me afterwards. You a'n't like the rest of 'em, and I thought perhaps you'd tell me."

"You have read the Bible, haven't you, Rollins?" asked Andrew, laying his hand upon the copy that lay open before him.

"Not since I was a little boy. I went to Sunday School two or three months when I was twelve or thirteen, and I used to learn verses then, but I've forgotten them all now."

"Let me read what it says about the soul after death; it is the word of God, Rollins, and every word is true. Sit down, will you?"

Rollins threw himself upon the ground, and bowing his head so that not a feature of his

face could be seen, listened intently to the passages that Andrew carefully selected with reference to the question which he had asked.

At the close of half an hour, Andrew paused, and in the same moment Rollins suddenly raised his head. His face wore the whiteness of death, and as he fixed his burning eyes upon his companion, he uttered the despairing cry—

“Hall, I am a lost man! *I am a lost man!*”

“Thank God, if you see that!” said Andrew, fervently. “*Lost!* Yes, it is true, but this Saviour of whom we have read is waiting to save you. He will ‘save unto the uttermost.’ Will you come to him just as you are?”

“What! with all this guilt on my soul, that is dragging me down to perdition! Would he take me as I am?”

In reply to this question, Andrew sang, in his rich, clear voice, the precious words that have soothed and comforted hundreds of fearful, penitent hearts :

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God I come.

“Just as I am, and waiting not,
To rid my soul of one dark blot;
-To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God I come.”

When he ceased singing, Rollins got up from the ground. “I’m obliged to you, Hall,” he said in a broken voice, “I’ve bothered you too long, and I’ll go now; but perhaps, when you pray to-night, you’ll remember me?”

“Yes, I will; but you will pray for yourself?”

“I wish I could,” sighed Rollins,” but I don’t know how.”

“You know what you want,” said Andrew; “is it hard to ask for that, when God has promised to listen?”


“Salvation, Christ, heaven, I want ’em all. O, I want ’em all!” and the strong frame of the soldier trembled with emotion, that he had striven hard to suppress.

“Let us kneel and pray together,” said Andrew, “and remember that God is not like

kings and great men of this world. If you are sincere, and mean what you say, he will forgive all the imperfection of language. He looks at the heart, not at the words, Rollins."

Like the prayer of the publican, was the petitions that Rollins sent up to heaven at that hour. The burden of it was, "God be merciful—for Christ's sake, be merciful to me a sinner!" and although when he left the tent it was with a dejected countenance, and expressions of deep anguish in view of his sins, Andrew could not but feel that God would answer him, and send peace to the suffering soul. In the battle of the following day, Andrew and Rollins fought almost side by side, but "one was taken and the other left." Just as victory was certain for our troops, Rollins fell, shot through the breast. For one moment Andrew bent over him, and as the life blood poured forth from the terrible wound, and the purple shadow of death settled around the mouth and the closed eyes, a single word breathed, rather than spoken, escaped from those panting lips. That word was "*Jesus!*"

CHAPTER XIX.

 HE prophet Elijah once complained that the name of Jehovah was forgotten by the children of Israel, and that he alone was left to serve God, and so far as he was able to see, this was the case. The time was very dark, and deeply must the good prophet have mourned over the sins of the people. But suddenly, breaking in upon him like the bright sun through thick clouds, came the joyful tidings from God himself, "I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

Then Elijah took courage.

In a like desponding state was Andrew Hall, as we have seen, when poor Rollins came to him for religious conversation. So

long as Capt. Kent remained with the regiment, there was one with whom he could hold sweet, Christian communion; but when he left it, with failing health, at the close of three months, Andrew felt that he was indeed alone. The chaplain, like too many of the chaplains in our army, was not a man of vital earnest piety, and the cold indifference that met him on every hand, not only from the men themselves, but from the officers who should have sustained him, seemed to extinguish even the faint flame in his breast. An occasional and very brief service on Sunday, was the extent of his religious labors, and even this ceased after a time, and the Sabbath was spent by the men, and alas! by the officers, in smoking, card-playing, and, wherever it was possible, in gambling and drinking.

The death of Rollins, and the incident of the previous evening, led Andrew to think even more seriously than before upon his duty as a soldier of Christ, and he determined,

let come what would of scorn, shame, and derision, to attempt some service for the Captain of his salvation.

Accordingly, when a suitable time came, he invited a few of the most seriously disposed of his company to meet in a grove near his tent, for a prayer-meeting. This invitation was received by some with an incredulous smile, by others with a decided refusal, and by two or three with evident pleasure. Andrew almost trembled for the result of this feeble effort, but his trust was in God, and he knew that it would be accepted for the motive, whatever were the consequences to others. He was at the appointed place some moments before the hour named, and those moments were spent in silent but earnest prayer, for the aid and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

One by one the men dropped in, until eight or ten were there, some leaning against the trunks of trees, others stretched out upon the green sward, their dark, sunburnt faces

turned towards the leader, who stood with uncovered head, in their midst.

"Boys," he said, when all was still, "you think it is a strange thing that I have asked you to come here for a prayer-meeting to-night. I had some reasons for doing so that I want to tell you by-and-by, but first, if you please, we will sing together some familiar tune.

" ' There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins.' "

You've all sung that at home, and it is a good hymn for us."

Andrew's voice was rich and powerful, and as its notes rang out full and clear, other voices joined with it, and filled the air with sweet melody. A brief passage of Scripture followed the hymn, and then Andrew again addressed his companions.

"Boys, you all knew Rollins. I saw him when he fell; he fought like the brave man that he was, and the name that was last on his dying lips, was '*Jesus*.' I have something

to tell you, about Rollins; something that happened the night before he died." Here the attention of the men was intently fixed, and they listened, not without emotion, to the account of the conversation of their late companion, in his last interview with Sergeant Hall.

"I think God heard his prayers," continued Andrew. "I think he died in peace, and as I thought of him, the rest of that day, trembling under a sense of his sins, and learning what he could of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, and then breathing out his life with the name of 'Jesus' on his purple lips, I determined, boys, to do what I could to induce others to make ready for the same fate. It is not right for us to rush into the battle like brute beasts, for we have souls that must be saved or lost; and as we can't tell how soon our turn may come to die, we have no time to lose in getting ready. What we do must be done quickly. Now, my friends, you know one reason why I asked you to come to a

prayer-meeting, but I have still another. If you have patience to listen, I will tell you a story of my own life. I will tell you what I have been, and I will tell you what, by the grace of God, I am trying to be."

"We all know *that* well enough," said one of the men with a poor attempt at a laugh, in which no one joined.

Andrew took no notice of the interruption, but in a few words sketched the dark outline of his early history. He told them how sinful was his boyhood, how miserable his prayerless home; tenderly he lingered over the memory of little Roxy, her suffering life and her peaceful death; he spoke of what rum had done for his father, what it was doing for himself when he gave his word to Roxy to touch it no more; and so eloquent were his words, so impassioned his voice and manner, that, as he paused, he found that tears were falling fast over the rough cheeks of his auditors. He closed his remarks with an earnest appeal to them to forsake all in-

toxicating drinks, and to prepare for the hour of death, which was undoubtedly near to some, if not all of them, and then, inviting others to speak or pray, he sat down.

There was perfect silence for a few minutes, and no one seemed inclined to break it, but at length a very young man rose to his feet, and said in tremulous accents :

“I am a professing Christian, but I haven’t lived up to my profession. It is *hard* to serve God in the army, but I mean to try to do it from to-night. I have a mother and sister praying for me at home.” Here his voice faltered and ceased altogether, and Andrew struck up,

“My soul be on thy guard—
Ten thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies.”

At its close, a tall, hard-featured man rose, and dashing the moisture from his eyes, spoke as follows: “I have been fighting


against God all my life long ; I haven't been inside of a church for fifteen years ; I haven't read a chapter in the Bible since I was a boy ; I have spent two years in the State's prison at Concord, New Hampshire ; my father and my mother were drunkards ; rum has been the curse of my life, but I've stuck to it as if 'twas my best friend ; I came in here, to-night, to laugh, and mock at you, Sergeant Hall, but let me tell you all, boys, *I can't laugh now!* If I should die to-morrow, I should go to hell ! There's no matter of evil that I haven't had a hand in. I don't know what to do ; I a'n't going to be converted ; I'm past that ; but I'm going to stand up here in your presence, and in the presence of God—if there is a God—and swear that, for the sake of the little girl that died, I'll never drink another drop of rum as long as I live ; and if the story of her life and death touches the soft place in any of you as it has in me, you'll promise the same." This promise, coming as it did from one of the most hardened men of their company,

was not without its effect upon others. One or two gave a similar pledge, and Andrew felt that there were others upon whom it would not be lost. He knelt and prayed with fervor that God would give strength to them all to resist sin in whatever form it might come, and that all might be led to seek that salvation by Christ, which would give courage in the hour of danger and comfort in the hour of death.

The meeting was closed with singing, and the men dispersed quietly, one only remaining for further conversation with Andrew. This one was the youth who found it "hard to serve God in the army." Together they paced up and down the green in front of Andrew's tent, talking of their past experience, and encouraging and strengthening one another in the faith from which one had swerved and almost fallen, until a late hour, when they parted like two brothers, fondly hoping for future opportunities of usefulness in the great field before them.

Can you realize, Christian, the joy that filled the breast of Andrew Hall, as he wrapped his blanket around him and lay down to sleep that night?

CHAPTER XX.

HE soldiers' Mail ! We have all read and heard of the eagerness with which the soldiers' mail is received in camp ; of the joy that flashes over the rough, sunburnt faces of the brave men as they receive their respective treasures. A letter from home ! How the sweet spot, with its circle of dear ones, comes up before the imagination with the vividness of reality, and how, for a moment, the longing wish to be there, away from the toil and danger of army life, sends a sharp pang to the sternest and most patriotic breast !

See them stealing away by themselves, the little white packages clasped close in their brown fingers, to be opened and read away from the gaze of rude or inquisitive eyes ; see the trembling eagerness with which the

seals are broken, the hasty glance over the closely written pages for the assurance that the dear home friends are all well, and then the slow, happy perusal, when each word is lingered over as if it were traced with gold!

Here is a young man, with a fair Saxon face, leaning against a tree, and smiling fondly as his blue eyes catch the loving words written by the little white hand that is to be his own, some happy day in the future, when this terrible war is over.

Here is another whose dark brow brightens and clears at the message sent from his little boy "to papa in the army;" and when he sees the round circle at the bottom of the page, and reads, "This is Bennie's kiss to papa, with Bennie's lots of loves," he raises it to his bearded lips, and a suspicious moisture dims his eye.

A third, sits upon a box at the entrance of his shelter tent, and the lines upon which his attention is riveted are from his young sister, just learning to write, and delighting to send

her absent brother specimens of her progress ; hard work she evidently has of it, and the sheet is guiltless of punctuation marks, though capital letters abound ; but the brother never minds these errors, for the uneven, misspelled words assure him how much he is thought of at home, and how dearly he is loved by his "own sister Bessie."

And here, sitting under the shade of a wide spreading oak, a strong man bends over a well-filled sheet, and reads the words of affection that a mother's hand has traced. She has written him the village news, and the little items of home life—how nicely Alice is getting on with her music, encouraged to practice three hours a day in the hope of being able to play something really difficult and beautiful to her brother when he gets home from the war ; how Hattie and Ned have sat for their photographs to send to him, and how Ned was so excited about it that he couldn't keep his little face still long enough, and so John must be contented with an ambrotype

instead; how the golden haired pet of the household still remembers and prattles about him, and asks to kiss his picture every day; and then she goes on to speak of his "vacant seat by the fireside," of the Sunday evening sings," when his voice was so sadly missed and longed for in the sweet, familiar hymns, and as the young man reads these words of affection from one whose love has always been fond, faithful and true, his proud head droops lower, and his breast heaves with the emotion that he can no longer repress. He is ready now to listen to the gentle counsels and warnings that follow, and when he reads at the close, "My boy, your mother is praying for you," he inwardly resolves that no act of his shall ever wound that tender heart.

And so the soldiers in camp read their letters, and smile or weep as they read.

Mother, sister, wife and beloved one, in your peaceful home, waiting, watching, praying for your soldier friend, whatever you feel of sorrow or anguish at his absence, let him

guess it only by the frequency of the letters you send him ; let them be cheerful, hopeful, and full of simple home talk ; and above all, don't be afraid to let him know that there is an hour of each day set apart, a sacred hour, in which you plead with your Father in heaven for him. The army is a hard place for a man to be in, but if there is one thing that will restrain and help him, it is the thought that in his dear, distant home his mother, sister and friend, are praying God to save him from danger and sin.

There are other letters that sometimes reach the soldier beside those that come from the heart-circle of friends. Kindly little missives, from loving children ; they drop from the sleeves or are found in the pockets of the flannel shirts that are sent to the army by the ladies of the Soldiers' Aid Societies which have sprung up all over our country in this time of trial and need, and they speak in "a still small voice" of Jesus and heaven. The judgment only will reveal the good that has been accomplished by such letters as these.

It chanced—ah, no ! I will not say *chanced*, for God's providence is over all things—but in the distribution of a certain box of clothing, there fell to the share of Watt Kyes, a blue flannel shirt, in the sleeve of which he found a letter addressed to "My Soldier Friend." It was just after the prayer-meeting of which an account was given in the last chapter, and Watt Kyes was the man who on that occasion had promised to drink no more rum "for the sake of the little girl that died." The letter, which he carried to Andrew Hall to read, for he was no scholar himself, and the writing was in a child's unformed hand, was as follows :

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—

The Superintendent of our Sunday School has invited each one of us to write a letter to a soldier, to be sent with a box of clothes, and the letters are to be put in the sleeves and pockets of the shirts. As I don't know to whom this letter will go, I cannot say much, but I hope that who will get this letter will be kind enough to write back to me and tell me how he likes it.

There is one thing I want to ask you, and that is, do you love to read the Bible and other good books? I hope you do, for I do. I have sent you a sheet of paper and envelop with this letter, and a very good little book for you to read, and I hope you will read it for my sake. I hope God will keep you from all harm and temptation, and when you are in battle, I hope God will keep watch over you, and not let a ball strike you, and bring you safely home when it is time for the war to be over. I hope God will go home with you and keep you from temptation and sin after you get there, and I hope you will bless God for taking such good care of you while you have been in such danger on the battle field, and I hope you will write to me and let me know if you found Christ, and I hope you have given your heart to Christ. Perhaps you have got some little girl of your own that goes to Sunday School, and that sends you papers to read when you are in camp, and also who thinks of you and talks about you, and thinks about you when you are in battle, and wishes that you were home to talk to her and tell her stories about the good people in the Bible. I have got a brother that wants to be a drummer boy, but father says he is a foot too short, and he is only six years old. I am eight years old. I think I have written quite enough for the first time to a stranger with whom I am not acquainted, nor

did I ever see him, but I hope I shall hear from him. Please to answer my letter as soon as you have time. Love Christ for my sake.

“From your friend, ANNIE TODD.

“P. S. Excuse bad writing.”

“Dear little girl!” said Andrew, folding the letter, and placing it in Watt Kyes’s outstretched hand. “She is one of Christ’s little lambs.”

“To think of her taking her time to write to a rough soldier that she never saw,” said Kyes. “She never would if she’d known it would fall into the hands of such a man as I am.”

“Yes she would,” said Andrew, confidently. “You are just the one she would have chosen to have it.

“Why?”

“Because you need Christ.”

Kyes dropped his head and sat silent for some minutes after this brief reply. At length he said, “Suppose I do—what’s the use, since I can’t find him? There’s no Christ for me, Sergeant Hall, *no Christ for me!*”

"Why?" asked Andrew in turn.

"Because I have driven him away," replied Kyes. "I determined years and years ago, that I wouldn't believe in a God, in heaven, or in hell. I put myself out of the company of good people, and kept with those that were as bad and worse than myself. It has been a long time since I've thought of God or another world, but the prayer-meeting brought up a strange feeling that I can't drive away, do what I will. I didn't shut my eyes last night but what your prayer and the story you told about little Roxy would come into my mind, and drive the sleep away. And now I've got this letter, and it will torment me, I know it will.

"Christ does not always leave us when we leave him," said Andrew, soothingly, for his companion was much excited. "He waits and waits with patient love for many years, until the sinner feels his need of him, and then he hears his cry for mercy, and washes away his guilt in the blood that was shed on Calvary."

Kyes shook his head.

“ I wish I had lived a different life,” he said, sadly. Then I wouldn’t be so ashamed and afraid to ask for mercy ; as it is, I can’t do it.”

“ The greater your guilt the greater is the grace that can save you, said Andrew.” “ The Bible says, ‘ Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ Is not there hope for you in such a promise as this ?


“ ‘ The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,
And there may I, though vile as he
Wash all my sins away.’

“ Jesus Christ said to the penitent thief, ‘ This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,’ and he is ‘ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.’ Only believe that ‘ he is able to save to the uttermost,’ and you will find the peace and rest you so much need.”

Kyes sat motionless, as Andrew went on pointing out to him the way of salvation. When he ceased speaking, the strong man

rose to his feet, and without uttering a word, went away. Andrew looked anxiously after him, until he was lost to sight, and then bowing his head, prayed that the poor prodigal might yet return to his Father's house.

CHAPTER XXI.

EARLY two years had passed since the commencement of the war—years full of incident and toil to the soldier—full of anxiety and pain to his friends at home. How the voice of weeping has gone up to heaven's gates from bleeding hearts, as the news has flashed over the magnetic wires, of battles won and lost; of the brave men marching straight up the enemy's batteries to be shot down by hundreds; of the brilliant charges, almost unequalled in the annals of history, in the record of which we may truthfully use those pathetic words of Tennyson :

“ Forward, the Light Brigade!
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blundered :
Theirs not to make reply,

Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die,
Into the valley of death
Rode the six hundred."

Ah, yes ! there has been weeping and great mourning, and yet who has not felt a thrill of pride at the thought, that in those moments of terrible danger, when—

" Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd ; " —

our men have stood firm and undismayed in the glorious cause for which they offered up their lives.

God keep them steadfast until that jubilant day, when rebellion shall be crushed down to the region whence it sprung ; when in deed and in truth " all men shall be free and equal ; " and the dear old flag shall float far and wide over North and South—its glorious stars and stripes no longer the toy of slimy, treacherous tongues, but the joy and pride of a united people.

Nearly two years had passed since Andrew enlisted, and although he had been in many battles, and seen much toilsome service, yet he had passed unharmed through all. The words of the Psalmist uttered by Aunt Becky as a prophesy, seemed in his case to be literally fulfilled, "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." He had seen the ranks of his regiment thinned out until of the first nine hundred, the remnant would not number three score men. Many times he had dashed on in the fight over the fallen bodies of his comrades, and at night returned to the ghastly field, to bend sadly and with tears over their dead faces. He had prayed beside the cot of the dying, and moistened the dry lips of the wounded; he had written many a letter of sympathy to the distant friends of those whose eyes he had closed in their last sleep, and to many suffering ones he had spoken of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, the Hope of the hopeless, the strength of the weak.

O, who, but Him who knoweth all things, can estimate the value of such a life as this?

Andrew's letters to his mother and other friends at home, were full of hope and courage. In times of deepest depression, when, in addition to the reverses of our army, Northern men with Southern opinions, were maligning the administration, and doing all in their power to discourage the soldiers, and prevent enlistments, while they prated of peace which was impossible, the patriotic spirit of our Christian soldier rose above it all; firm and strong in its integrity. The prayer oftenest on his lips and in his heart in behalf of the country he loved, and for which he was willing to die, was this :

"God of peace ! send peace to this people when we are fit to receive it ; but first, in thy mercy, send Freedom. And if it must be bought at the price of thousands more of precious lives, O, God ! stay not thy hand because of the cry of those who suffer, but carry on thy work until we are purged from

the curse that has brought this distress upon us !”

But earnest as he was for the prosecution of the war, Andrew's thoughts often reverted to his home, and he looked forward with eager hope to the time when he would be there again. The Sunday School and church services, the little prayer meeting in Aunt Becky's cottage, the companionship of such friends as Mrs. Laurie, Mr. Wallace, and the lovely family of Mr. Kent, in whose regard he held almost the place of a younger brother, the fond affection of his mother and Mrs. Bayley, were so attractive to his imagination, that he was sometimes forced to drive them from his mind lest they should unman him.

It was on the eve of the battle of Fredericksburg. The dangerous work of throwing the pontoon bridges across the Rappahanock was completed, and the great body of the army was to cross early in the morning of the following day. Andrew Hall was busy making his final arrangements, before lying down for

a few hours rest, when he was interrupted by the entrance of Watt Kyes. Several weeks had passed since the two had conversed together, and although Kyes was very constant in his attendance at the little prayer meetings, which were now held regularly two evenings of each week, Andrew had felt for some time, that he wished to avoid speaking of his own feelings, as he had once so freely done. He was somewhat surprised, therefore, at this late visit. Kyes came up to the box on which lay paper, pens and ink, and placed a small package upon it, saying abruptly,

“If I’m shot to-morrow, Sergeant Hall, and you live, that is to go to Annie Todd, of Boston, and I depend upon you to see that she gets it. It is a letter I wrote to her with my own hand, and a little ring and a box that I cut and carved with my jack-knife. I’d have got you to write the letter for me, but poor as it is, I thought she would be better pleased to have my own writing and spelling. You’ll see that she has it, wont you?”

“Yes, but I hope you will have an opportunity to send it yourself, Kyes,” said Andrew.

“Perhaps I will, but I wanted to make sure of it, for I mean that child shall know what she’s done for me, by her little letter.” As he spoke, Kyes turned to leave, but Andrew stopped him. Laying his hand upon the broad shoulder, he said kindly,

“And if you should fall, I, too, should like to know with what feelings you went into the battle, and whether you were ready to go?”

“*I believe I am,*” said Kyes, with grave emphasis. “I couldn’t begin to tell you what I have suffered in my mind the last four weeks; it has been *awful*, but for two or three days the weight has been gone. I don’t feel anything like peace or joy as some of the men talk of in the meetings, but I believe that Jesus Christ can save even me, and I am willing to trust myself to him. I wish I could do something to prove that I trust him.”

“The best thing to prove it, is to really believe that he is able to save you,” said An-

drew ; "that is what he requires first of all. I am glad that you are willing to trust him," he added, as Kyes again turned to go, "and I hope your life will be spared that you may labor for Christ in this his earthly vineyard many years."

A silent bow was the response to this, but Andrew saw the stern lips quiver, and knew that it was no want of feeling that kept him from speaking.

On Saturday, December 13th, 1862, the engagement which cost us so dear, commenced in terrible earnest. We will not pause to recount the scenes of that day, for they are indelibly stamped on the memory of thousands, while thousands more shudder and weep at the mention of the battle before Fredericksburg. Through the long hours of the day, until late in the afternoon, Andrew paused not, though shot and shell fell fast around him, and the wounded and dying lay at his very feet. He and one other, a stalwart lumberman from the pine forests of Maine, kept an

open mouthed rebel battery silent from noon until four o'clock. With watchful eyes fixed upon that single point, their rifles never failed to arrest the hand that was put forth to fire, ere its purpose was accomplished. It was terrible thus to send one soul after another into eternity, but who, in the excitement of such a scene, when every nerve is strung to its utmost tension, who stops to dwell upon this thought? It is laid away for the quiet hour when in silence and alone, all painful memories return to sadden the spirit, and moisten the eyes that are unused to weep.

"They tell me you are bullet-proof, Hall, and I begin to believe it," said Andrew's companion, as he was charging his rifle. "You have never got so much as a scratch yet, to prove that you have been in battle; and to-day the shot and shells have been flying like hail close to us, but they don't touch you. What is the secret of your good luck?"

"I have no secret, and my good luck is the providence of God. I have no fear of death,

for whether it comes now, or years hence, it will only send me to my home in heaven." This reply was yet on Andrew's lips, when a bullet from the rifle of a sharpshooter, who was concealed in the woods, entered his shoulder just above the breast, and without a groan he fell to the ground.

"Where is God's providence now?" cried the lumberman, bending over him and raising his head.


"Over you and me," whispered Andrew, as the blood gushed from his white lips. "His will be done."

Tenderly, at the command of their Captain, to whom Andrew had endeared himself by many little acts of thoughtful kindness, four of his comrades bore him from the field. Watt Kyes, at his head, moistened his lips with cool water and gazed down into the white, peaceful face, until for the tears that would come, he could gaze no longer.

"He is a Christian, if ever there was one!" said the lumberman warmly. "It is a pity to lose him!"

"We wont lose him," cried Kyes, sharply, "I'll watch him day and night. *He shall not die*"—then pausing in his impulsive speech, he added, softly, "unless it is the will of God."

CHAPTER XXII.

T was not the will of God that his young servant should die at this time. For ten days he lay in a hospital tent, hovering between life and death, while Watt Kyes, who watched over him with a woman's tenderness and devotion, feared that every hour would be his last.

"You have saved his life, Kyes," the Surgeon said, on the morning of the tenth day, as they were preparing to remove him to Washington; and the change wrought by the Spirit of God on that hard heart, was never more clearly shown than by his earnest reply; "Doctor, I have done what I could, for he has done more for me than I can ever repay, but—" and here he raised his deep-set gray eyes to heaven, "*The One above has saved him.*"

It was an agreeable change from the hospital tent, with its poor accommodations, and unsuitable food, to the comforts and conveniences of the hospital at Washington. Andrew was not yet able to speak, but he smiled in reply to Kyes' expression of satisfaction and pleasure, as he handed him a large bunch of purple grapes, and for the sake of that smile the poor fellow would have dared fire and flood, and emptied his pockets of their last penny.

The hours and days of pain and weakness which followed, were not without their blessing to the young soldier, and some of the richest experiences of his life were gained, while he lay upon his cot, too feeble to raise his hand to his head. He had time to reflect upon the past, and to review the way in which he had walked hitherto. The thorny and tangled paths of his boyhood, when not one ray of light broke through the clouds of ignorance and sin that enveloped him; the smooth, straight way — smooth, because straight — in

which he was now travelling, with Jesus for his Guide, and heaven for his home, often presented themselves to his mind, and never had the contrast seemed greater than now. Sometimes he thought with a sigh of the high hopes he had cherished of future usefulness in the Master's vineyard ; must he give them up ? surely, if by so doing he could serve God better, and yet it was hard. It was a painful lesson to learn, but he learned it at last, and could say from his heart in the words of Jean Paul,—

“Suffering is my gain ? I bow
To my heavenly Father's will,
And receive it hush'd and still,
Suffering is my worship now.”

One of the saddest trials incident upon Andrew's present position, was to be compelled to lie speechless while so many were dying around him with no hope of another and a better life. It would have been worth all his suffering, could he have been permitted to speak to them of the Friend of sinners, and direct their wandering thoughts to the home

in heaven. The Chaplain passed through the ward every morning, with a kind word and a smile for each sufferer, but the brief interview seemed to accomplish little, where so much of instruction, warning and exhortation was needed. Day after day, as one and another was carried out dead, and as Andrew pondered over their careless life now ended, and their prayerless death opening to them the gates of eternity, it was more than he could calmly endure.

One incident peculiarly affected him. Very near his own cot, lay two men, one of whom was rapidly sinking under inflammation caused by the amputation of a limb. He had clung to life with the utmost tenacity, insisting that he should recover, notwithstanding the assurance of the surgeon that his case was hopeless, and it was not until the death-damp was on his cheek, and every breath a gasp, that he realized his condition. And now he began to think of the world to come. Dark indeed, was the valley of shadows, for he had

no Shepherd on whom to lean ; no kind voice to whisper, " It is I, be not afraid ! "

With a groan of anguish he turned to his companion in suffering, and said faintly,

" Clark ! Clark ! I'm dying—don't you see, I'm dying ! What shall I do ? "

Clark, himself an irreligious man, made no reply.

" *What shall I do ?* " repeated the poor fellow, with terrible emphasis. " Can't you say a prayer, Clark ? O, I can't die without a prayer. "

" I don't know how to pray, Holbrook. Pray for yourself, can't you ? "

" No, O, no, I cannot. Clark ! do try to pray for me—for I'm—dying ! I'm dying ! "

" Don't you know the Lord's prayer ? "

" Once, when I was a little boy I knew it. My mother taught it to me years ago, but I can't remember it now. I wish I had cared more for such things, but I didn't think there would ever be a time when I should need them so much. O, if some one would but just pray for my poor soul ! "

"Try if you can remember the words," said Clark, "perhaps they'll come to you, if you begin."

The dying man groaned aloud, then there was a moment of silence, and then he said, faintly, "Our Father, which art in heaven," another pause followed, during which he was trying to recall the petitions of that long-forgotten prayer, to comfort him in this hour of his extremity.

"Hallowed—be—thy name." Slower and more faintly came each word from those trembling lips. "Thy kingdom—thy kingdom—come: thy will be done on earth—as—it—is—in—heaven—" his voice ceased, and for many minutes, Andrew, who listened and wept, thought the poor fellow was gone, but suddenly he spoke again in a clearer tone than before, and the words he uttered were these, "Thine is the kingdom, the glory, and the power, forever. Amen! Amen!"

Thus died the poor soldier, with the prayer of his boyhood on his lips. He had put it

away from him while God crowned his life with health and vigor, but he could not *die* without it. God is all merciful, and who would dare say that he refused to listen to the cry of this fearful soul? But ah! how sad to put off the thought of him until the last hour, and then turn to him with the bare remnant of a wasted life!

It was many days before Andrew was able to dismiss this painful scene from his mind: the despairing cry of the poor man; "What shall I do! I'm dying! I'm dying!" haunted him by day, and made his dreams terrible.

There was but one bright spot in the dark picture, and it was this: when the Chaplain passed through the ward on the morning following Holbrook's death, and paused by his empty cot to say, "poor fellow! he is gone," Clark called him to his side, and with deep emotion, said—

"Will you tell me, sir, how to pray? I never thought how much I should need a prayer until he died, last night."

Andrew listened to catch the Chaplain's reply, but could not. Whatever it was, it only deepened the gloom on the dark brow of the wounded man, still it was some comfort to know that he was beginning to see his danger and his need.

As soon as he was strong enough to be allowed to speak, Andrew sent a message by Watt Kyes to Clark.

"Tell him," he said "that I overheard his conversation with Holbrook the night of his death, and that I hope he will remember that Jesus has told us how to pray. 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you;' and tell him, Kyes, that I have been praying for him ever since that night."

Kyes carried the message faithfully, and lingered a few minutes by the cot, talking in a low voice. When he returned it was with a saddened face. In reply to Andrew's inquiries, he said,

"He isn't going to live long, and he don't

feel ready to die, but he wanted me to thank you for your kindness and say that he hopes he has learned to pray. He wanted to see his wife and children once more, and die at the old homestead in Vermont, but he will never live to go from the hospital. He says that he believes his soul is safe, for he has given it up to Jesus Christ to take care of."

This was all Andrew ever learned of poor Clark's spiritual state, for that night he died.

Months passed away. The winter was over, and spring had returned with its balmy breezes and delicate flowers, to gladden the hearts of the sick, and bring to the sorrowing bright thoughts of the resurrection.

Andrew, contrary to the expectation of the Surgeon, slowly regained his strength. The ball had never been extracted from his chest; it was supposed to be lodged in the lung, and although he was troubled with a cough, and some difficulty in breathing, yet he began to talk hopefully of home, for he longed to be there once more. The last few days of


his stay in the hospital, while he was waiting for his discharge, were among the most irksome that he had known. Their monotony was broken only by the visits of a little blue-eyed girl of some six years, who came regularly every morning with a basket of beautiful cut flowers "for the poor soldiers." Like a fairy she would flit from cot to cot, leaving a rosebud, a lily, or a sprig of mignonette, on each pillow, with a smile that seemed sweeter than the flowers.

Andrew was a particular favorite with the little lady, from the first. She lingered longest beside his cot, and amused him with her pretty prattle. Now she would tell him how blue the sky was, without a cloud in it, and now how green the grass looked on the lawn at home; but her thoughts were most occupied with a bird's nest that was in the process of building on the branch of an elm tree close by her mamma's window. Every morning she reported the progress made since the previous day, until the three little speckled

eggs were deposited on their bed of moss, when her delight knew no bounds.

It is impossible to describe the effect that the visits of this sweet child had upon the soldiers. It was better than all the medicines and restoratives of the nurse and physician. She seemed to bring the sunshine with her, and when she went away, more than one fervent "God bless you!" followed her.

CHAPTER XXIII.

E will not attempt to describe Andrew's return home, or his meeting with his mother and Mrs. Bailey. The tears of thankfulness, the fond caress, the clinging embrace, the disconnected scraps of eager talk, who has not known the joy of them, and who has not felt that they were sacred to the dear home circle.

As soon as it was known that Andrew had arrived, many of his friends came to bid him welcome. Among these Aunt Becky and old Rosy were first. They hobbled into the sitting-room, arm in arm, and advanced to Andrew's couch with shining faces and extended hands.

"Bless the Lord that I've lived to see this day," cried Aunt Becky. "I've had my doubts once or twice, but for the most part,

I've 'spected it ;" and Rosy wiped her eyes and tried to smile, as Andrew, raising himself from the cushions, drew chairs for them to sit down close beside him ; but the smile changed to a flood of tears, and throwing her apron up over her face, she sobbed out,

"I can't help it, child, I can't help it, and I must have my cry out."

"I'm not going to look so any longer, Rosy," said Andrew, cheerfully. "I am much better, and now that I am at home, and have mother and so many dear friends to take care of me, I think I will soon be quite well and strong, and able to attend Aunt Becky's prayer-meeting."

Rosy shook her head ominously, but Aunt Becky smiled :

"That's right," she said, "there's nothing like keeping up good courage, and trusting in the Lord. You do look pale and poor enough, Andrew, but I dare say you're going to get well. When they told me you was wounded," she went on, "I felt as if a ball had

struck right through my heart ; but I kept praying and praying that God would spare your life. so's you might come home ; and I'd have been glad to have had him take me instead, 'cause I'm an old withered branch of no 'count, you know. Well, in the course of two or three days I begun to feel better and more reconciled, for I thought perhaps the Lord had something more important for you to do in heaven than on earth, and in that case you'd ought to go, and just as soon as I thought that, then it seemed 'pressed on my mind, that you wasn't going to die, till you'd preached the gospel to the poor, like as you always wanted to do, and I've had faith to believe that ever since, and I believe it now."

"I hope I am resigned to the will of God, whatever it is, concerning me," said Andrew seriously. "If my life is spared, I shall try to study as soon as I am well enough ; but if otherwise, surely I ought to rejoice that I am so early permitted to enter into the rest of Heaven."

"Yes," said Aunt Becky, wiping her eyes, "but it is very strange that sometimes God takes away the youngest, and brightest, and best, and leaves poor, feeble old folks like me and Rosy, that can't do much good to anybody; but I 'spose we'll understand all such mysterious things when we get to the heavenly Canaan."

By this time Rosy had recovered her self-possession, and was able to look calmly in Andrew's face. "I used to think about you a sight," she said, "specially when I heard there's fighting. But there's one passage in the Bible that you read one night in the meeting, that kept a coming into my mind, and it seemed kind of comfortable to me. Don't you remember when the king of Syria sent a great host to the city where 'Lisha, the prophet was, how 'Lisha's servant was frightened because there's so many of 'em, and the Lord opened his eyes so't he saw the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all round the prophet to take care of him? Well, I thought

if the Lord sent horses an' chariots to take care of 'Lisha, he'd do the same thing for you there in the army."

"Why yes, Rosy, interrupted aunt Becky, "and didn't ye never think of the other place where it says, 'the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them,' and then 'a thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee?'"

"That was what you repeated to me the night before I went away, aunt Becky," said Andrew; "how many times I have thought of it just before going into battle. And the Lord did stand by me, and kept me from harm, until he saw that I needed just this kind of trial; so I really think, dear friends, that I have great reason for gratitude, even while I lie here so faint and weak."

It was several days before Andrew was strong enough to go out to walk or ride, but never was invalid so cared for and remembered. Mrs. Laurie called almost daily with

bunches of flowers and baskets of fruit, and other delicacies to tempt his capricious appetite ; Mr. Wallace spent many hours by his couch, and Mr. and Mrs. Kent, with Lily, now almost a young lady, came often to see him ; but Miss Hilary never came with them. She had passed "over the river," and was now singing among the shining ones in the better land. They spoke of her with subdued voices and tearful eyes, but they mourned not as those without hope, for they knew the separation was only for a little while, and that in the life to come they would meet never to part again.

But little remains to be added to the history which we have followed thus far. Andrew's wound had disabled him from again entering the service, and he obtained an honorable discharge. He is not shut out, however, from the prospect of an active, useful life as a Christian. He is studying as diligently as his enfeebled health will permit, for the ministry, but he will not wait until his

preparatory studies are completed, before engaging in the work that he loves. In Aunt Becky's prayer-meeting and the mission school, endeared to his heart by so many precious memories, he devotes some of his best thoughts and most earnest prayers. To the home of the poor, the suffering and the wretched, he is a frequent and ever welcome visitor; to the degraded drunkard, no matter how low he is fallen, he holds out a brother's hand, and by words of sympathy and encouragement, seeks to raise him to a better life. These labors, undertaken for Christ's dear sake, are abundantly blessed by him in the reformation and conversion of sinners, while in Andrew's own heart the flame of love and devotion burns daily more and more bright. He has consecrated himself to the service of God, and therein finds joy, rest and peace, far above and beyond the gift of this world; while for the future, the one prayer he offers is in the beautiful words of Whitmarsh:

“I ask no heaven till earth be Thine,
Nor glory-crown while work of mine
Remaineth here : when earth shall shine
 Among the stars,
Her sins wiped out, her captives free,
Her voice a music unto thee,
For crown, new work give thou to me —
 Lord here am I !”

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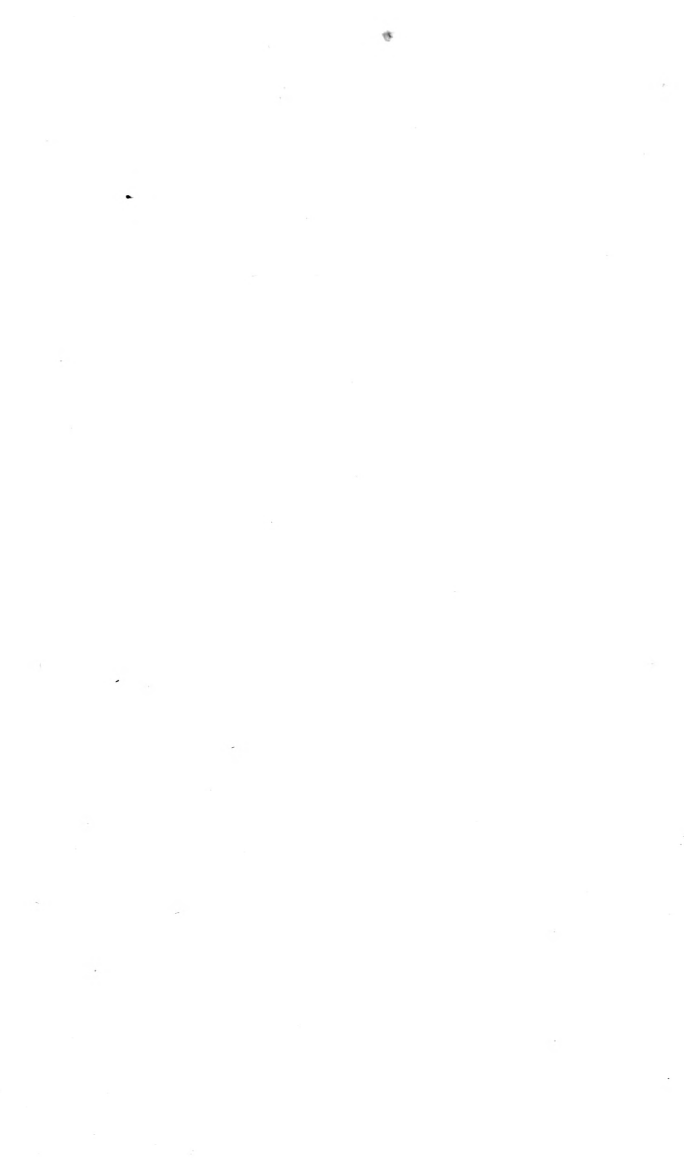
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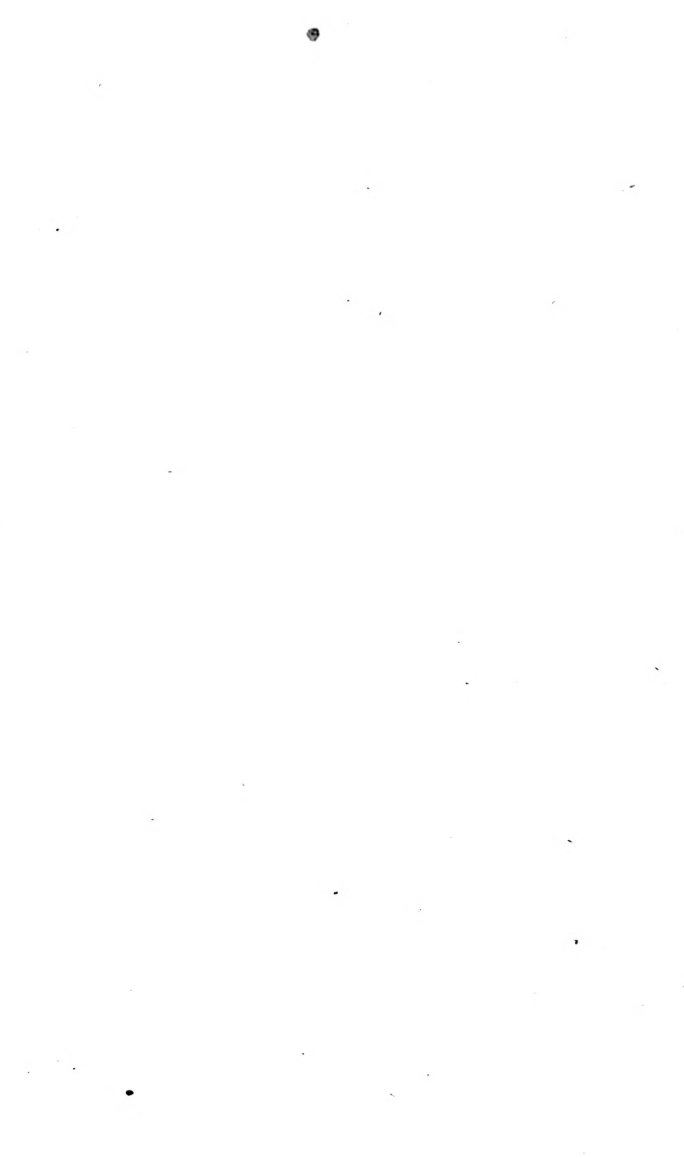
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